

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS A TOOL FOR  
BOUTIQUE DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT:  
WALTER BEINECKE JR. AND NANTUCKET, MASSACHUSETTS

BY

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“To my parents and my husband, my three most important supporters”

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School  
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In the decades that followed the Second World War, the town and island of Nantucket were transformed into a resort community catering to high-end tourism. This transformation was largely the vision of one individual - Walter Beinecke, Jr. A creative entrepreneur, Beinecke understood that the development and growth of Nantucket was inevitable given the economic prosperity and socio-cultural changes of postwar America. Through the non-profit, Nantucket Historical Trust and Sherburne Associates Company, Beinecke promoted the preservation of the island's historic structures and landscapes - both built and natural - as a way of preserving the island's historic infrastructure and containing uncontrolled development that could damage the island's historic charm. Beinecke's reimagining of Nantucket paralleled and reflected the formalization of the historic preservation movement in the 1960s. This thesis attempts to document and analyze Beinecke's strategy for developing Nantucket as a resort community through historic preservation. A constant comparison type case study analysis was employed and five criteria were developed to provide a basis for examination. These five criteria: destination competitions and sustainability, carrying

capacity, destination positioning, uniqueness and sense of place were derived from an examination of tourism and preservation literature. This case study also employs primary records such as: oral histories and published interviews with Beinecke, and other stakeholders to gain insight into the mind and reasoning behind Beinecke's actions. While many critics of Beinecke's considered his actions to be elitist this examination demonstrates his commitment to preserving the history and unique character of Nantucket.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Once the Whaling Capital of the world, Nantucket, Massachusetts today is an extremely popular tourist destination that caters to high spending visitors (Town of Nantucket). The Travel Channel ranks Nantucket among the 22 Best US Islands and deems it the perfect New England getaway for visitors of all ages (Barnard, 2017). Much of the Island's Whaling Era, 'Golden Age' architecture can still be seen all over the island today. The island's historic charm, unique history and beautiful scenery attracts almost 400,000 visitors to the island annually (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). While the local Historic District, established in 1955 preserves much of the original residential, Whaling Era infrastructure, much of what is visible today along the waterfront and in the heart of downtown is not as it was during that time.

After the fall of the whaling industry on Nantucket in the mid-1800s, the island fell into a fifty year depression (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Lancaster, 1993). The island, like many cities throughout the United States faced new challenges by the beginning of the 1900s and continued with the onset of WWI, the Great Depression and eventually WWII. While several inventions and advancements spurred by wartime demands created new opportunities for the growing nation to succeed they also caused a large shift in the social-economic state of the country.

Many large northeastern and Midwestern inner cities lost large industry to newly developed suburbs and the newly popular cities of the southwest and as the cities fell into decline law makers and government officials struggled to replace the lost capital. However, due to the same reasons the United States' middle class was more

prosperous than ever. More middle class families than ever before were able to become first time home buyers, purchase a family car and take time away from work for vacation. Attempting to capitalize on this economic trend many cities turned to tourism as a means of stimulating their economies. Hundreds of cities faced development pressures to redefine and cater their spaces to tourists. By the late 1950s Nantucket, Massachusetts was also experiencing the need to absorb and cater to tourists.

However, a man by the name of Walter Beinecke Jr., a long time summer visitor felt that too much development pressure could harm the delicate ecosystems. Nantucket was home to the largest collection of colonial era buildings in the United States. New development began threatening the structures and the quaint feel of the island. Walter Beinecke Jr. took it upon himself to step in to prevent the destruction of the island's unique sense of place. Beinecke purchases several structures with the personal and charitable goal of preservation but as tourism pressures increased Beinecke began purchasing land and property to tailor the development in a way he felt complimented and supported the existing environment.

It is interesting to note that Beinecke's preservation efforts came before the formal national preservation movement which began with National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Beinecke had been vacationing on Nantucket since the age of five and was very knowledgeable about the island's history and appreciated the original historic fabric. His family history of sales and business however urged him to turn his passion into profit. Having worked for several years as a businessman, sales man and entrepreneur himself, Beinecke saw great benefits in preserving the still intact architecture both economically and socially.

Through some re-envisioning and restoration, Beinecke was successful in preserving the feel and charm of Nantucket's Whaling Era through restoring and rehabilitating much of the downtown area. While not popular at the time, Beinecke is now considered to be one of the island's saving graces as his efforts in preservation helped lead to the entire Island being placed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the first of many in the country. His actions undoubtedly altered the course of Nantucket's history and in effect redefined the community as a tourist destination.

While it is clear through visitor numbers and land values that Beinecke was extremely successful in designing a high-end tourist destination, this study aims to more closely examine the actions and steps he took to achieve this. Walter Beinecke Jr. was a business-minded entrepreneur who summered on Nantucket for most of his life. However, it was in the 1950s when Beinecke began taking a renewed interest in the island from an economic perspective. Having a deep appreciation for Nantucket's history, Beinecke began purchasing land to preserve and rehabilitate historic structures in order to make Nantucket a more competitive and sustainable tourist destination that catered to wealthy visitors.

As will be discussed in this research, his actions undoubtedly influenced Nantucket as a tourist destination and are still visible throughout the island today. This research aims to examine the actions of Walter Beinecke Jr. and how he used historic preservation as a tool to develop Nantucket as a Boutique Tourist destination. In order to accomplish this a criteria was developed through an examination of destination development, boutique destination development and historic preservation literature. The five criteria that were derived from the literature and chosen especially for their

relevance to this case study on Nantucket are: Destination competitiveness and sustainability, carrying capacity, uniqueness, sense of place and destination positioning. A constant comparison case study method is employed to examine how Beinecke's actions influenced Nantucket as an existing tourist destination and how he used preservation as a tool to develop a boutique tourist destination.

## CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### **Introduction**

This research briefly outlines the history of the preservation movement and tourism within the United States in order to provide a foundational understanding moving forward. Nantucket, Massachusetts is then introduced as a tourist destination. The review of the literature then proceeds to the life and family history of Walter Beinecke Jr. along with an introduction to his personal involvement on Nantucket. While there may be more to be said about each of these topics, a brief introduction is provided to set the stage for a deeper examination of the case study that focuses on the development of Nantucket as a tourist destination through the lens of historic preservation.

### **Historic Preservation**

The preservation of historic places in the United States started in the mid-1800s with the focus of preserving monuments of the American Revolution (Kimball, 1941). The 1856 formation of the Mount Vernon's Ladies Association is seen as an early milestone. The home of George and Martha Washington was in need of repair and constant care and so Cunningham founded the Ladies Association's for the sole purpose of purchasing Mount Vernon. (Kimball, 1941) John Augustine Washington III, the great-grandnephew of George Washington, had attempted to sell Mount Vernon to both the federal government and state of Virginia before finally selling it to the Ladies Association for 200,000; making him the last private owner of the property (Mount Vernon Ladies Association, 2017). As the constitution of the United States prevents the federal government from any measures which would subject property in private hands

to restrictions against demolitions or modification, preservation in America has continued largely through purchase by agreement by private bodies and privately run associations such as the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (Kimball, 1941).

However, since then actions have been taken by the federal government to protect public spaces as well. The Act of March 1 1872 established Yellowstone National Park “as a public park for pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people” and placed it under control of the Secretary of the Interior (National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.). In the years following the creation of Yellowstone the United States continued to carve out national parks from federal lands of the West. These parks were administered by the Department of the Interior while monuments, natural areas and historic areas were administered by the War Department, Forest Service and the Department of Agriculture but would eventually be united under one system- The National Park Service.

The Organic Act, signed August 25, 1916 by President Woodrow Wilson created the National Park Service. This new federal bureau within the Department of the Interior was responsible for protecting and “conserving the scenery and the natural and historic objects and wildlife therein and to...leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations” (National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.). In 1933 by Executive Order the monuments and sites from both the Forest Service and the War Department were transferred to the National Park Service creating the National Park system still in operation today. The National Park System now includes areas of historic, scenic and scientific importance and covers more than 84 million acres across all 50 states. (National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior, n.d.)

After the Second World War the United States experienced a period of rapid change. Legislative acts like the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944<sup>1</sup>, Housing Act of 1949 and the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956 were meant to facilitate the growth of the economy and foster the movement of people, information and technology around the country. The nation experienced a period of rapid growth during the post war era and while the increased movement of people, money, technology and information fostered the country economically, rampant development during this time threatened and destroyed much of the nation's existing heritage.

After almost a century of grassroots movements, like that of the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 was passed to protect and preserve the nation's heritage from rampant federal development during this time. (National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers , n.d.) Among other things, the National Historic Preservation Act set the federal policy for preserving the nation's heritage, established the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks programs, and through section 106, required that the federal government take historic infrastructure into consideration when pursuing development.

While many places throughout the country had already taken action to preserve places and structures of local significance the National Register of Historic Places became the nation's official list of districts, sites, buildings and structures which were been deemed significant on a national level and worthy of preservation. Several cities throughout the United States with influential histories quickly became listed in some way on the National Register. On October 15, 1966 Charleston, South Carolina became one

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<sup>1</sup> More commonly known as the GI Bill

of the first districts listed on the national register (South Carolina Department of Archives and History, n.d.).

Charleston played an important role during the revolutionary and civil war and had a long history in colonial America as a major seaport. Charlestonians had long been aware of the city's singular sense of place and individuals, organizations and governments, as early as 1920 with the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings, established and promoted a strong preservation ethic (National Park Service U.S. department of the Interior, 1988). Charleston became a leader in preservation throughout the country and their actions in zoning and public private partnerships became the inspiration for others throughout the country. These early local preservation efforts combined with the national recognition have made Charleston one of the most popular tourist destinations within the country today. Today Charleston is regularly listed on Conde Nast Traveler as one of USA's Top 10 tourist destinations and receives almost 4 million visitors a year (Stephens, 2004).

Tourism to the South Carolina grows at a 5% rate annually but Heritage tourism on the other hand, increases by over 30% annually. Charleston is not unlike other cities throughout the country however. Heritage sites are popular tourism destinations throughout the country, but these cities did not become popular overnight. Years of dedicated preservation efforts and balancing growth and development have preserved these city's unique histories, sense of place and identities making these locations different and worth visiting. "Tourism is about visiting places that are different, unusual and unique. The more one city comes to look and feel just like every other city the less reason there is to visit" (McMahon, 2012). Preservation has therefore become an

essential tool for destination development as they compete with for tourist dollars and market recognition. “It is no accident that Paris- a city that looks and feels different- gets 27 million visitors per year, more than any city on the planet” (McMahon, 2012). Preserving the intangible aspects of a city i.e. its history and identity, while challenging, is more important than just about anything else.<sup>2</sup>

### **Modern Tourism in the US**

At the turn on the 20<sup>th</sup> century the United States was largely still a class system society. Leisure time away from work was a luxury afforded only by the wealthy elite of the country. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998) However the thousands of young men that returned from WWI found a changed United States. Many wartime technological advancements were now redefining American society leading way to unprecedented social and special mobility and access to information. For the first time many middle class families were able to afford luxuries like vacations like never before.

By 1927, there were 20 million automobiles on the road, up from less than 3 million only a decade earlier (Cowan, 2007; Smith, 1998). Henry Ford’s refinement of the assembly-line made production of vehicles easier and cheaper making them more affordable to the average America. Similarly, newly discovered uses for aluminum and steel made flying easier and cheaper and in 1928 United-Boeing airline began transporting passengers and curing mail and around the country (Smith, 1998).

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<sup>2</sup> According to Frank Cuypers a marketing professor at a university in Antwerp, Belgium who helps develop and market cities.

These advancements brought unprecedented mobility to the average American household and many people were taking advantage of the opportunity to escape the congested cities for a scenic retreat into the countryside and urban America. The desire to escape the congested industrialized city centers gave rise to the new trend of 'auto-camping' (Cowan, 2007). Automobile ownership was at an all-time high and now that they could afford to leave the economic city centers Americans were taking to the road to explore the nation's landscape. The nation's parks experienced great success during this time period and even the remote reaches of the wilderness were beginning to supply fuel and food to travelers through municipally-owned 'autocamps' which provided campsites, water and bathing facilities to travelers (Cowan, 2007).

Travel became so popular that, Travel Trade, the first journal devoted to 'the interest of those engage in the business of serving the traveling public' was created in July 1929. (Smith, 1998) The onset of the great depression and subsequently World War II, led to a relatively brief but drastic decline in travel. Many attempting to escape the bread lines of the northeast and the dust bowl of the Midwest started migrating to California in hopes of pursuing the American Dream and later joining the military for the regular income. Those that grew up in this era were known as the Depression Kids and are characterized by their drive, commitment to the American dream and their 'make do' attitude. As the great Depression ended (circa 1934) and more employment became available the West became particularly attractive partially thanks to promotions by the Santa Fe Railroad and the success of Western films like Stagecoach starring the legendary John Wayne.

With even greater access to automobiles Americas returned to the roads and expanded their vacationing westward. By 1935 the American Automobile Association estimated about 40,000,000 roughly one-third of the population took motor tours each year. Oil companies began providing road maps for free and small cities and towns featured new 'auto courts' and roadside motels. Originally described by Willey and Rice (1933) as three hundred thousand shacks, these accommodations cost as little as \$1 per person per day, provided a bed, wash basin, and toilet making domestic travel both comfortable and affordable" (Smith, 1998). These auto camps, auto-courts and motes not only provided travelers with a place to rest but also served dual purpose by encouraging visitors to patronize the town's business (Cowan, 2007). Struggling city centers began taking advantage of this trend and constructing motels and camps around parks as way to attract visitors in hopes of boosting businesses and encouraging economic activities. Targeting tourists via auto camps became such a successful economic driver that cities began to look towards other types of tourism to boost activity.

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw an explosion of military, fraternal, and business societies such as, the Civil War veterans' Grand Army of the Republic and the World War I veterans of the American Legion and also several medical and legal organizations all of which held conventions regularly to disseminate information and enable social connections. The increased number of automobiles on the road and the expansion of the national railroad networks during this period allowed these societies and organizations to grow rapidly and more importantly, made travel to annual or semi-annual meetings and conventions affordable. Many cities capitalized on

these different trends by creating convention and visitors' bureaus to recruit national and regional meetings in hopes of inundating the area with visitor's spending dollars. (Cowan, 2007) Throughout this time period however, cities continued to struggle to compete with the national parks and more rural areas for tourist's spending dollars.

This trend away from cities became compounded one hundred fold after World War II. The GI Bill offered a variety of benefits to returning servicemen including tuition waivers and loan assistance for new housing. This, plus a monthly stipend for their service, allowed many servicemen to attend college, settle down and become first-time homebuyers. The American economy boomed again, much like it had after World War I and entrepreneurs like William Levitt capitalized on the housing demand trend and employed Henry Ford's assembly line business model towards building affordable homes in the new suburbs at an alarming rate. Sales in the original Levittown in Pennsylvania began in March of 1947 and over 1,400 homes were purchased during the first three hours.<sup>3</sup> These brand new homes featured white picket fences, car-ports to showcase the family automobile and all new appliances quickly attracted thousands of white, middle-class families in what came to be known as the white middle class 'exodus'. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998; Cowan, 2007; Kimball, 1941; Smith, 1998)

After the middle class exodus from the cities to the new post war suburbs Northeastern and Midwestern cities suffered from 'deindustrialization' throughout the 1960s and 1970s (Cowan, 2007). Many of the manufacturing bases that had been the main source of economic revenue for so many cities began to decline due to automation

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<sup>3</sup> Figures taken from the Levittown page of Wikipedia.

and relocation overseas or in the new and booming 'sunbelt' region of the southwest. The once thriving civic centers of the country were now facing the lowest unemployment levels since the great depression. Individuals and businesses alike continued to flee city centers in search of opportunities in the suburbs and newer cities throughout the Sunbelt. This trend largely left the large cities of the Northeast and Midwest occupied by poor racial minorities and became increasingly viewed as dangerous and unpleasant. (Cowan, 2007)

Revitalizing the downtowns of the Northeast and Midwest became an almost obsessive goal that resulted in new policies, economic reports and master plans that had minimal effect. Noticing the desperation, the hospitality industry promised that the expansion of tourism would bring thousands of jobs and millions of dollars to attractive new downtown spaces. Cities across the country spent millions of dollars on new sport arena in downtown areas, entertainment districts, conventions centers and hotels. While these large scale investments had little immediate effect it became an important priority for many cities as 'proof' that the city had been reborn and was worthy of capital investment and media attention. (Cowan, 2007)

Meanwhile, newer cities throughout the south and southwest developed new types of 'entertainment concepts to attract the growing middle class. The most iconic of these became Disneyland in Anaheim, California. Opened in 1955 Disneyland was designed by animator Walt Disney as the post-war version of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century European 'Pleasure Park'. The opening of Disneyland and its fantasy villages spurred construction of new airports and hotels near Anaheim which launched the city onto the map. The city grew into such an immensely popular tourist destination the concept was repeated in

1971 with the creation of Disneyworld in Orland, Florida. (Smith, 1998) Disneyworld has experienced such success that a seemingly never ending number of imitators and competitors have flocked to Orlando in hopes of capitalizing on the popular destination.

The explosion of innovation, ease of movement and economic growth during this time caused such a considerable amount of urban sprawl and city redevelopment that many individuals and communities felt they had become disconnected from their roots and they watched old building torn down and replaced time and time again. The results of this era's development gave rise to a national historic preservation movement and as legislation was passed to actively preserve and protect important historic structures, spaces and artifacts the tourism industry began to capitalize on the new trend once again.

Cities and towns began to shift away from total redevelopment towards a goal of sensitive redevelopment or adaptive reuse in order to preserve their identity and sense. Thus from this a new type of tourism grew within the United States to visit and pay homage to the cities and towns that had shaped and literally built this country. Cities like New York, Chicago and Charleston with long histories became popular destinations for those wishing to reconnect with family ties, or pay homage to war memorials. These cities started to become the new 'old country' and a sense of nostalgia gave new life and meaning to these places as heritage destinations much like the major cities of Europe.

As these destinations have continued to age a visible trend has emerged to reconnect with historic roots and weave old identities into new ones to create a holistic tourist destination that not only offers the newest hotels with the best amenities but also

has a unique character. Capturing and showcasing this unique character and original identity has become of paramount importance to hundreds of small towns and big cities alike as the edges of the map have been filled in and globalization has lead a homogenization of traits and amenities throughout popular destinations. Today, according to Statista the travel and tourism industry contributed 1.5 trillion U.S. dollars to the Gross Domestic Product in 2015 making it one of the largest industries in the country. (Statista, 2017) As destinations have become ever aware of the economic potential within the tourism industry they have also realized the need to remain competitive and distinct within the minds of tourists around the globe. The ease and affordability of travel has widened the range for competition among destinations and the development of a unique brand image is essential in order to differentiate oneself from another potential competitor in order to reap the benefits of this 1.5 trillion dollar industry.

### **Nantucket**

Nantucket is a small island located 30 miles off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts with a year-round population of about 12,000. Originally however, Nantucket was inhabited by about 3,000 Native Americans of the Wampanoag tribe.<sup>4</sup> In 1602 the Island was discovered by Englishman Bartholomew Gosnold and in 1659 a small group of Englishmen settled on the island. The early English settlers established the town of Sherburne, at Capuam Pond on the north shore and in 1692 the island was made an official colony of Massachusetts Bay. (Town of Nantucket) Later, in 1795, the

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<sup>4</sup> This tribe also populated Cape Cod and its other surrounding islands

town of Sherburne was relocated to the west side of the 'great harbor' and renamed Nantucket, meaning 'Faraway land' in the Native tongue, Algonquin.<sup>5</sup>

During the early years, the island's economy was largely based on agriculture and sheep farming, but by the seventeenth century Nantucket turned to whaling as their main source of economic income. The practice of hunting and harvesting whale blubber was already well established in other parts of the world including on Nantucket. Nantucketers learned whaling from the Native American population. The Native Americans had learned to spot the blowhole sprays from the shore. They then hunted the whales in small canoes just off shore and then drug the whales onto the beach where they harvested the whole of the whale for its blubber and meat. Nantucketers soon learned these skills and soon began harvesting whale blubber for oil lamps on larger and larger boats. Whaling became an extremely lucrative venture as Whale oil fueled the only source of light for the vast majority of the industrialized world. The most common type of whales hunted were the Eubeleana or 'right' whales and sperm whales and whalers went through great lengths to track down these lucrative species.

Initially whaling vessels did not venture far from shore but in the 1750s ships were adapted, to process blubber at sea and whaling crews began making longer and more dangerous voyages farther out to sea. While whaling was a dangerous and unpredictable endeavor, the risk also brought high reward. Nantucket prospered immensely from whaling and from about 1800 to 1840 and was considered the whaling capital of the world. Single excursions could produce profits upwards of 50,000 dollars,

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<sup>5</sup> Nantucket is the only place in North American to have the same name for town, county and island

which more than compensated for the negative aspects. Ships were often at sea for several months, even years at a time and conditions could be brutal aboard the ships.

Inspiring Hermann Melville's *Moby Dick*, the well-known story of the Essex served as a constant reminder of the great risk these men wagered on each voyage and the tragedy became the very beginnings of the decline great Whaling Era. In 1820 the Essex, a great whaling vessel, was rammed by a sperm whale severely damaging the ship. Much of the crew was able to escape the sinking ship in life boats but they became stranded far out at sea. Of the original twenty crew members that manned The Essex only eight survived, some, through cannibalism. The story became known worldwide. (Town of Nantucket)

Immense wealth quickly accumulated on the island and several well-to-do families built large estates on the island. These houses were often equipped with servants quarters in the basement and captains walks on the roof so they could keep an eye on their ships docked at the wharf. Several influential American families, like the Macys and Starbucks had homes on the island and began summering regularly, adding to the island's notoriety.

The whaling industry entered a state of decline around the 1840s when a large sand bar began developing outside the main harbor that prevented larger, oil laden ships from delivering their precious cargo. This, along with the discovery of black oil Pennsylvania in the 1830s began making the whaling industry obsolete. The final blow to the whaling industry on Nantucket came with the Great Fire of 1846 which burned down the wharves and a large portion of the commercial center in town.

The rebuilding of Nantucket after the Great Fire began with the Athenaeum, the town library, in 1847. Many of the wealthy families retained their summer homes on Nantucket but began exploring other business ventures. Rowland Hussey Macy, for example, who operated a dry goods store on the corner of Main and Fair Street that was destroyed in the fire, moved to New York and opened a department store that became the national Macy's chain. The city and island alike entered a brief state of decline and stagnation as much of the wealth began leaving the island, but lore, beaches and great history of Nantucket continued to attract visitors as it had for years.

Being the small island that it was, Nantucket imported much of its labor and almost all of its goods, because of this, the island had a long history of boarding houses to accommodate its many guests. "After the introduction of deep-sea whaling during the second decade of the eighteenth century, the need of late arrivals for shelter prompted the establishment of inns" (Lancaster, 1993). These early boarding houses and Inns were large family homes conducted by women. These types of 'inns' were characterized as genteel boarding houses according to Lancaster (1993) and were advertised in the local newspaper the Nantucket Inquirer throughout the early to mid-1800s.

By the late nineteenth century Nantucket began redeveloping itself as a summer resort destination for the wealthy families of the large New England area cities. The majority of these families rented the small fish cottages in the eastern town of Sconset during the summer months. As Nantucket did not inherently have any of the supplies these families needed (lumber for home repairs, coal, and firewood) throughout their visits to Sconet the island needed to import them. Scooners were used to import goods from the mainland and the materials were stored directly on the docks along the

waterfront of downtown. Much of the large businesses there had been here were destroyed in the great fire of 1846 and few of them rebuilt here. Thus, this area, during the late 1800s and early 1900s became the industrial center of town.

### **Walter Beinecke Jr.**

Walter Beinecke Jr. was the first child born to a wealthy family on February 20, 1918 in New York City. His father, Walter Beinecke Sr. had been a lifelong businesses man with successful interests in the insurance, building, construction, and sales industries. His mother was an heiress to the Sperry & Hutchinson Company. The Beinecke and Sperry family legacies were that of hardworking entrepreneurs, family businesses owners, and creative opportunity seekers. Both of Walter's Grandfathers were entrepreneurs and passed much of their instincts and good business acumen onto their children. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998)

Walter's paternal grandfather, Bernard, was of German descent and married a German protestant by the name of Johanna Weigle. They had seven children together and lived in New York. The youngest of these children, three boys, Edwin, Frederick, and Walter followed in their father's footsteps becoming extremely successful businessmen. These four men, Bernard, Edwin, Frederick, and Walter worked closely together, until Bernard's death in 1932, as corporate raiders, using their instincts and individual skill sets to acquire, improve, and ultimately sell businesses in several realms. Edwin was an excellent businessman, Frederick became an engineer and Walter specialized in sales. By teaming together in their business ventures, even after the death of their father, the Beinecke family experienced profound success in the

construction, banking, and insurance, among other, industries. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998)

Similarly, on Walter's mother's side, there was a long legacy of business owners and entrepreneurs. The family was of Dutch descent and anglicized their last name, Spirey to Sperry when they settled in Virginia. Walter's maternal great-grandfather, Jacob Austin Sperry, was a newspaper publisher. He and his wife Susan Langley, moved closer to her family in Michigan after she became pregnant with their son Thomas. Thomas made his living in Michigan as a traveling salesman for a silver company until 1894 when he designed the first independent trading stamp company to distribute stamps and books to merchants. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998) The company was named Sperry & Hutchinson Company, known more commonly as S&H green stamps, and became very popular in the 1900s. The S&H program offered incentives to shoppers rewarding them for making timely payments in cash and helped maintain customer loyalty to merchants that participated in the program. The company became so successful that the family eventually moved to New Jersey so that Thomas could be closer to the office in New York. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998)

Thomas Sperry died suddenly from ptomaine poison in 1913 leaving a widow and four children (Beinecke Jr., 1998). Their eldest child, Kathryn Sperry was not yet old enough to take over the family business and Sperry & Hutchinson Co. passed into the hands of a bank out of Chicago, where it almost failed. The Beinecke family then purchased the minority interest in the company and began to reinvigorate the business.

Through their purchase, the young Beinecke sons met several members of the Sperry family. Walter would eventually marry Kathryn Sperry and a few years later his brother Frederick married Kathryn's cousin, Carrie Regina Sperry. Together, the Beinecke-Sperry families were able to purchase back the remaining controlling interests of Sperry & Hutchinson Company and the family operated the business until the late 1970s (Beinecke Jr., 1998). At the height, the company had 20,000 employees with 3,000 redemption locations and they distributed 36 million catalogues a year. For a period of time in the 1960s Sperry and Hutchinson printed more stamps each year than the United States Postal service (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998).

Walter and Kathryn Beinecke settled in New York and welcomed their first child Walter Beinecke, Jr. on February 20, 1918. While Walter Sr.'s principal interest was in insurance business he maintained a lifelong business connection with his two brothers in many other industries. One of their most successful being in the construction industry.

The Beinecke's involvement in construction sparked Edwin's engineering background during his return voyage from fighting in Europe during World War I. He was exposed to a new type of pipe scaffolding not yet used in the United States. Edwin brought the technology back to the states where he acquired a patent for the technology and the brothers went on to create the Patton scaffolding Company in New York. The company exploded onto the market after a hurricane caused a fire that burnt down the wooden scaffolding of the Sherry Netherlands Hotel in New York. New York outlawed wooden scaffolding launching the Patton Scaffolding Company onto the scene immediately.

The three brothers continued to find success in several of their business ventures in part because of their upbringing in a very entrepreneurial family, but mostly because of their complimenting skill sets. Not only were each of the three brothers either an expert engineer, business man, or salesman but they also had the drive and eye to spot successful opportunities, a quality which Walter Jr. believes he inherited. This trait is what Walter believes provided him with the drive and vision to reinvigorate Nantucket Island into the world class resort it is today.

As a young family, the Beineckes lived in New York but frequently vacationed on Nantucket Island. Walter Beinecke Sr. and Kathryn Beinecke rented a summer home in Sconset for several years and eventually purchased the property as a summer home. During the school year, Walter Beinecke Jr. attended an all-boys prep school in New York. He recalls the experience being somewhat 'raw' but continued to attend this school until he was about nine or ten years old (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998).

With the onset of the Great Depression in the late 1920s and early 1930s, Walter's parents, like many Americans, fell on hard times and were forced to move from their large New York estate into a hotel and Walter was sent to boarding school. The hotel gave the Beinecke's two rooms, as a means of repaying some of the considerable insurance debt owed to Walter Sr. With only two rooms, Walter's parents saw it best that he attend an all-boys boarding school in Massachusetts while his sister and parents remained in these two rooms in the hotel.

At boarding school, Walter recalls receiving failing grades for simply not completing his assignments and recalls only doing well, and exceptionally well at that, if

the subject matter really interested him. His teachers reported “that he was just as bright as anyone else, but was utterly undisciplined academically” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). By the age of 15, barely into high school, Walter approached his father about leaving school and entering the work force. Walter recalls that what his father did next is one of the most important and influential things his father did for him. “It was to give me a kick in the pants” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 15).

His father gave him fifty dollars and a one way ticket to Portland Oregon and said “see how far you can go.” Looking back on this, Walter recalls that this trip to the Pacific coast, which at the time, he looked at as an adventure, was his father’s “counter action to having concluded that he was spoiled and ought to have a different set of values and see things differently” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). Walter stated in his 1998 interview that he now looks at this ‘adventure’ as an excellent lesson.

In 1933, during the middle of the Great Depression, there were few employment opportunities for a young man of Walter’s age with very little education. With the equivalent of only about a month and a half worth’s of wages in his pockets Walter knew he needed to act quickly. Upon arrival in Portland Walter signed on with the U.S.S. General Grant<sup>6</sup> and became a merchant marine earning about thirty dollars a month plus food.

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<sup>6</sup> The U.S.S. General Grant was one of two one class liners that operated as part of the State Steamship Company headquartered in Portland whose chief economic supply was maintaining contracts to keep American Army supplies stocked in the Philippines. The American ships were not yet subsidized and as a result the American shipping companies competed against the rest of the world on a direct basis. At the time

Walter spent eight months working as a Seaman and traveled to several exotic places, including Japan and China. During the voyage, Walter recalls that the young Seaman were told stories of the fantastic adventures to behold upon arrival at their destinations. While these experiences as a young man in the Pacific defined Walter as a man, he recalls experiencing a rude awakening upon arrival.

His first night in port, Walter recalls leaving the Japanese barroom early to report for his lookout shift. His shift was from midnight to four in the morning. At about three thirty in the morning two men, one of which slept on the bunk below Beinecke, came staggering drunkenly towards the wharf. The two men, too inebriated to bother to look for the gangplank, reeled toward the ship and went right over the end of the dock. The first lucky man, went straight into the water, but as Walter watched helplessly, the other bounced off the ship and the dock, violently hitting his head and was killed by the time he hit the water. "I did not take a drink between twenty and twenty-five years after that. So if there was a lesson to be learned, I learned that lesson by osmosis. It was pretty expensive for the guy who taught me" (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 21). These sobering experiences continued.

In China, Walter witnessed daughters sold into slavery for twelve Chinese dollars, equivalent to fifty cents US. In Hong Kong, he witnessed people dying in the streets and people clubbing each other to death over the meat scraps of dead carcasses that floated down the river. Building on his earlier, much more pleasant life

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American Seaman were the lowest level of American society, and thirty dollars a month, while terrible for American standards, even in the depression, was an excellent wage on the global scale. Chinese and Indian companies paid their Seaman eight dollars a month along with a bucket of rice.

experiences, the experiences that Walter gained in the 'real world' continued to pave the foundations for his life upon returning home to the U.S. eight months later. "I came back convinced that I knew more about the real world than most of my classmates or that I was older because of this experience (Beinecke Jr., 1998, p. 22)," and after two years of attempting to finish school, Walter left to enter the work force once more.

Walter set out, at the age of 17, to enter the workforce without a high school degree and accepted a job overseas, through a connection of his German aunt, working for a felt factory. However, after learning some German, Walter left the factory and obtained a job as a translator for a traveling salesman. At this time, any successful businessman had to speak more than one language. Almost without exception they spoke at least one of: English, French, or German, in addition to their own tongue. Walter worked with a German salesman who also spoke French and some English. For almost a year and a half the pair traveled frequently with Walter acting as an assistant as well an interpreter during business transactions.

During the last four or five months of his work in sales, however, Walter acted as a courier smuggling information out of Germany. Traveling on an American Student visa, Walter smuggled citizens' information concerning stocks and overseas investments which were slowly becoming illegal leading up to World War II. Citizens of Nazi Germany were forced to turn in anything they owned in foreign countries. Germany enforced such rules through censorship of the mail. However, as many of the traveling salesmen had their businesses and financial interests abroad they needed a way to continue business and often smuggled sensitive information across borders instead of using the mail. Walter carried messages and business information out of Nazi Germany

across the Dutch border about once a month until he was ultimately ordered to leave in 1937. Much of Walter's German family lost their homes and property as their American ties tarnished them for Nazi Germany.<sup>7</sup>

After returning from Germany, Walter returned to live with his parents in New York City. He accepted a job as Junior Executive at The American Tobacco Company and worked five days a week in New York. (Martin, 2004) Walter recalled this time being very influential for him. Walter's mother and sister still summered on Nantucket, but now as a young working professional, Walter, unlike his father, did not have the means to travel every weekend. While Walter's father continued his normal routine of commuting to Nantucket over the weekends to spend time with his wife and daughter, during the five week days, their New York home turned into somewhat of a 'bachelors quarters'. "It was a very meaningful time for me, as I look back at it. He and I got to know one another, in what to me was a much more meaningful way than during my childhood and the time I was in school" (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 50).

Walter married Jean Burrell in January 1942 and had his first child in 1945. Walter, changed now as a family man, felt there was more to life than just work and began to take a deep interest in the ever-changing postwar world around him. Walter, like his father developed a great sense of social responsibility and drive for community outreach. As he stated in his oral history, my father and uncles "were very forceful, always, on the concept that anybody who benefited from the system, as they had, had a

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<sup>7</sup> There are still some survivors who have communicated with the German government of a possibility of getting the property back that the Nazis took over years ago.

duty to put things back into it” (Beinecke Jr., 1998, p. 56). During this time, Walter worked closely with the head of advertising and marketing at American Tobacco and quickly learned that there was a heavy price to be paid if you really wanted to succeed with the company. Having become a family man himself, Walter noticed that Mr. Hill, the president, had no family life, no friends but simply had a maniacal fixation to be the best.

In 1947 he took the experience and knowledge he gained at American Tobacco, and set out again in search new of employment. At the age of 27, Walter went to work as a distributor for the automobile manufacturing company, Kaiser-Frazier in New Jersey. (Martin, 2004)<sup>8</sup> For about two and a half years Walter worked with Kaiser-Frazier in the new and booming post-war car industry. However, Walter began noticing that the business was not prospering as much as it could. The company began to suffer and in the winter of 1948 the northeast experienced a terrible snow storm the factory shut down and it became clear it was not going to survive. They had not been able to make the year’s model change and Walter felt they were going to disappear within the next year. Worried and experiencing ‘the worst case of frozen assets anybody ever had’, Walter Beinecke Jr. flew to Nassau to seek wisdom from his father.

Walter explained that his colleagues and conventional sales wisdom indicated that the best course of action would be to sell as much as possible until spring, make as much money as possible and then quit. His father simply stated, “Bud, you are old enough now, there is something to learn. There are situations you look at and you have

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<sup>8</sup> A chance meeting in a men’s restroom of the Plaza Hotel had introduced him to Joe Frazier and two weeks later Frazier offered him the distributorship in New Jersey. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998)

to say to hell with the cheese, let me out of the trap” (Beinecke Jr., 1998, p. 41). Walter thanked his father, gave him a kiss and returned to New York that night. One month later Walter Beinecke Jr. terminated 130 employees, and sold his three places of businesses: a major service garage, his showroom and a minor garage. With two employees left, they worked from the basement of his house to liquidate the remainder of his stock. “I was one of the few that got out alive” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 41) Walter later stated in an interview.

After leaving Kaiser-Frazer in 1948 Walter Beinecke Jr. became an “extra pair of legs” for his Uncle Edwin who was, at the time, the new full-time operating head of Sperry and Hutchinson <sup>9</sup> (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). Walter Beinecke, Jr. became a member of the third generation to serve as an employee of the Sperry & Hutchinson Company. Starting as Edwin’s executive assistant, Walter traveled five nights a week for the company. Sunday night he caught a plane out of Newark to Portland, Oregon. “I would work Monday in Portland, Tuesday in San Francisco, Wednesday in Los Angeles, Thursday in Fort Worth and Friday in New York and get home Friday night. I was in every office when it opened at nine o’clock in the morning.” Walter was on the verge of becoming a workaholic, the very thing that drove him to quit American Tobacco, but he recalled working for the family business, “was more exciting. Frying your own fish is more fun

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<sup>9</sup> As previously mentioned, the three Beinecke brothers, along with their father Bernard, purchased Sperry & Hutchinson Company in 1920.

than frying somebody else's fish." (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998)

Walter grew tremendously with the company and eventually served as Vice-president of sales for over ten years. (Martin, 2004) During his many years at Sperry & Hutchison (S&H), Walter Beinecke continued to invest his time in several other interests as well. The family still controlled the Fuller Company, along with the mail chute subsidiary, and were there major interest in Austin Nichols, a liquor distribution and importing company. Walter himself invested in Florida cattle ranching, his children's local school and continued visiting his family's long time summer home in Nantucket with his own young family (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Hyton, 2016).

### **Walter Beinecke Jr. on Nantucket**

Walter Beinecke Jr. began frequenting Nantucket Island with his family as a child in the early 1920s. When Walter was about five years old, while his family lived in New York, he became ill with Mastoiditis<sup>10</sup>, a disease not common anymore today thanks to antibiotics. However, at that time they had no particular treatment for the disease. Doctors recommended sunshine and fresh air and knew that if one managed to survive the disease they would need a period of convalescence.

Walter's parents had friends who owned a home in Sconset, a small village on the east side of Nantucket Island, and invited the Beineckes to use their cottage upon learning of Walters's illness. Walter's father, Walter Beinecke Sr. was not able to leave

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<sup>10</sup> According to Wikipedia, "Mastoiditis is the result of an infection that extends to the air cells of the skull behind the ear. Specifically, it is an inflammation of the mucosal lining of the mastoid antrum and mastoid air cell system inside. Mastoiditis is usually caused by untreated acute otitis media (middle ear infection) and used to be a leading cause of child mortality. With the development of antibiotics however, mastoiditis has become quite rare in developed countries. Untreated however, the infection can spread to surrounding structures, including the brain, causing serious complications.

for an extended period of time so he stayed behind in New York while Walter's mother Kathryn, came to Nantucket with her two small children, Walter Jr. and Betsy.

During their first trip to the cottage it rained for the first ten days of their stay. However, on the eleventh day the weather was apparently so beautiful that Walter's mother fell in love with the island (Beinecke Jr., 1998). After this initial visit, the Beinecke's decided to rent the cottage from the two brothers. Several years later Walter, Sr. offered to buy the cottage from the brothers, but they were not ready to part with their Nantucket property so the Beinecke's continued to rent the cottage for seventeen years. Finally, after seventeen years of renting the two brothers decided to sell and the Beinecke's purchased. Kathryn returned to summer on Nantucket every year, even without her children, until her death some fifty years later.

During those many years, Kathryn and the children took a five hour train ride from New York to New Bedford and then a three and a half hour steamer ride to Nantucket.<sup>11</sup> Upon arrival at the Nantucket Warf, the family took the public bus service to their cottage in Sconset for several years until years later when Walter Sr. purchased a car. While the trip may have been somewhat spread out over the course of a few days, depending on arrival and departure times, the entire trek took over ten hours in total.

Throughout these many years, Walter Sr. stayed behind to work during the weekdays but joined the family on Nantucket over the weekends. On Friday night

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<sup>11</sup> There were four steamers, two of which would eventually move on to serve in World War II where one was sunk in English Chanel acting as a hospital ship during the invasion on D-Day. The remaining two remained as steamers ferrying passengers to and from Nantucket.

Walter took an overnight steamer from Manhattan to New Bedford then another ferry from New Bedford to Nantucket, ultimately arriving in Nantucket around 10:00 am the next morning. Walter Beinecke Jr. remembers it always being “a big event to come over and pick up dad on Saturday morning when he arrived on the island” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). This system, of the father figures commuting to the island became very commonplace, and Walter Beinecke Jr. remembers “they made a very jolly affair of it. The boats seemed very grand, with individual passenger cabins, dining salons and a large lounge. It was a big thrill, at least once a summer to make that trip with my father” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998).

These weekends were the only time the entire family was together for leisure activities. Late Saturday mornings became family time. Then all the families would gather together on Sconset Beach for big picnic lunches with the entire summer community. Around 2:30 that afternoon all the men would disappear to play golf. They returned later in the evening just in time to attend the social event held in the village every Saturday night.

A similar schedule occurred on Sundays. Golf in the morning then family time followed by beach time until about 2:30 when the fathers needed to begin their journey back home for work. The wharf was about seven miles from Sconset and during that time, the Beinecke's made an event out of the occasion. The entire family would ride along to drop Walter Sr. back off at the Warf. The boat left Nantucket around 4:00 p.m. to head back to New Bedford. From there the men caught the overnight steamer back to New York and everyone was back at their offices by 9:00 a.m. Monday morning.

As for the family members who stayed on the island, summer was in full swing. As a child, Walter Jr. remembers growing from a tricycle to a bicycle and having an Express wagon out of which he sold vegetables from the family garden to his neighbors. He recalls that “it was a great day, the day I realized I could sell beet tops separately from beets.” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 50). Walter recounts that these days, were most likely the beginnings of his entrepreneurial instincts coming to fruition. Experiences like these, out in the world, not schooling, would be what would mold Walter into the entrepreneurial minded businessman he became later in life.

Walter frequented Nantucket with his family until leaving for the Pacific Coast at the age of 15. He began returning to the island to vacation soon after the birth of his first child in 1945. Walter’s wife Jean, had grown up vacationing on Nantucket with her family much as he had. The family house that they owned in town meant a great deal to Jean and she wished to continue visiting the Island. The two decided to return every summer during the first few years of married life and eventually began renting a cottage of their own.

Walter, ever the explorer, did not spend his time on the beach relaxing as he did during his childhood however. Walter did not consider himself ‘a good vacationer’. Rather than spending hours day-dreaming on a beach, as a young man Walter spent his time exploring the town and earning all he could about Nantucket History.

I cannot just sit on a beach happily for many hours. I am not good at games. I am terrible with balls. I am blind in one eye and the other one has problems. So if somebody throws a ball at me I am apt to see two of them and not know which is the real one. So I have never been much at games and I always look for something to fill in my time. So I got

interested in Nantucket architecturally and historically (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 51).

Consequently over the year his interests in the Island slowly began to shift from a vacation destination, to an active hobby and eventually to a business venture.

Over the course of his many years touring Nantucket's downtown area, Beinecke began to realize and deeply appreciate the Island's history. The Whaling Era, up until this point, had been Nantucket's golden age. Once the whaling capitol of the world, Nantucket had prospered exceedingly during this time and accumulated a great deal of wealth (Philbrick, 1993). This prosperity and wealth was still visible throughout via the grand infrastructure that still lined the streets by the time Beinecke and his young family began vacationing there. The mansions that once belonged to the great whaling captains, while in disrepair, still lined the cobblestone streets and the picturesque fish cottages still dotted the islands beaches. There had been little large scale development on the island as a whole throughout the early half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While few hotels had been construed to cater to the small number of wealthy tourists the residential district remained as it was during the Whaling Era, the town supported small businesses and the waterfront the heavy industry.

Beinecke had grown attached and quite knowledgeable of Nantucket's unique and well intact history. Nantucket is the largest collection of colonial buildings in American and the community felt a strong attachment towards these structures. In a sense these structures defined the community's sense of place. Beinecke began associating himself with the preservation efforts already in place around the community and in 1957 he began the Nantucket Historical Trust. Nantucket had recently become the second place in the United States, after Charleston, to have a historic district

legislated by state legislature (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998) The local designation allowed for some architectural control within the community but any other efforts to maintain or preserve the islands character came from non-profit organizations such as the Nantucket Historical Association and then Beinecke's Nantucket Historical Trust.

During this time period however the Island was still in a relatively depressed state. The island never fully recovered after the collapse of the whaling industry and during the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there had not been enough income from tourism for the island to completely revitalize themselves. The waterfront and immediate surrounding area became an unsightly docking and storage area, where ships and schooners could deliver, store and sell the necessary goods like lumber and fuel that the few residents and visitors required. Nantucket, like hundreds of other northeastern cities and towns, had cut itself off from the water. The waterfront area had become an industrialized eye sore from the nearby residential districts (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998; Cowan, 2007; Lancaster, 1993).

However in the decades following the end of WWII, tourism within the United States was well on the rise again. The country as a whole began realizing the potential economic benefits tourism could offer if an area was able to tap into the market (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998; Cowan, 2007; Smith, 1998). By the early seventies tourism had become so prominent that the state of Massachusetts teamed together with the federal government to conduct a report on the effects of tourism within the state. The federal government paid eighty-five percent of the report, the state paid ten and each county was supposed to pay five

percent. Nantucket was the only county in the state that did not participate, but the theory was that the arbitrage between Cape Cod and Nantucket was quite constant.

After reading the report, Beinecke and other members of the community became convinced that Nantucket was going to be put under a great deal of development pressure. While the community as a whole had a more Laze fair view of the development, Beinecke felt the action needed to be taken to ensure the development that did happen was beneficial for the island. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998)

While many people felt that things ought to be left alone and to just take whatever happens, “some, like myself, felt, while you could not stop the path that what the country usually calls progress, you could at least influence it, if you prepared for it” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 55).

Beinecke realized that an uncontrolled growth on the Island could severely damage not only the unique historic architecture, but could also damage the culture, and the island's sense of place.

With no zoning laws to prevent large scale development he feared that Nantucket could turn into a Coney Island amusement park. It was during this time that Beinecke came to a realization, “My commercial life at that time was sales and my instincts and my background were sales. You can call it marketing, or you can call it merchandising, or you can call it entrepreneurship, but I saw opportunities to do things” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). Beinecke felt that even though he had a strong internal drive to protect and preserve the history and assets of Nantucket he realized that these pursuits needed to be sustainable, and sustainability, in this day and age meant profitable.

I have long had a theory that if you are interested in the voluntary parts of our system, we handle most of them, as a nation, as charitable activities and our federal government gives tax exemptions if you support these things... But so many of these things you cannot do to the extent that your enthusiasm would like you to do, just on charity. You go around and pass a tin cup and say, I represent a worthy purpose, will you not throw something into the cup? My experience is that the needs usually are always greater than the cup. So you have to think about that and come up with some approach to get more leverage, more help. Well ours is a profit motivated economy.

It just makes sense to me that what you try to do is fit your program into that system, rather than being an exception and just existing on the charitable dregs that people will throw off; try to fit your purpose into the system. In the case of historic preservation, which was kind of the direction my interest in Nantucket took, it meant that you had to find some pattern where you make people support the goals of historic preservation, not just because they were being a nice guy and throwing a little something into your tin cup, but because it was going to be to their advantage. They were going to get something for themselves out of it.

Most people have to spend their lives taking care of themselves and the people closest to them. If you want them to participate in something that is outside of their first priority they have to get some benefit out of it... Being specific at a place like Nantucket, you have a man that wants to put up a neon sign to advertise his beer parlor, you have to find a way of showing him that he will have more prosperity, he will sell more beer, his life will be easier and better if he does not put up the neon sign (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998).

Beinecke drew on the connections around him to figure out a way to help Nantucket, to preserve Nantucket and protect its history and character. During his time as president with a community hospital near his home in New Jersey Beinecke became close with the vice-president, Don McClean, a former advisor to the Rockefeller Brothers and a member of their staff.

After learning of Beinecke's interests, McClean introduced Beinecke to Kenneth Chorley who also worked closely with the Rockefeller Brothers and was in charge of some of their important interests including Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia. Beinecke met with Chorley and explained his hopes, fears and aspirations for Nantucket. While

Beinecke hoped to conduct charitable endeavors through historic preservation on Nantucket he realized that for preservation and active destination development to happen, the community needed to be involved in a manner beyond pure charity. It needed to benefit the community in some way.

Chorley explained the relationship between the foundation, Colonial Williamsburg Incorporated, as a charitable foundation, under its charter from the State of Virginia and under the federal tax laws and the commercial aspects of Colonial Williamsburg which are run as tax paying private enterprises.

This is the things that I was trying to envision here on the concept that anything you want to do that goes beyond the tin cup has to be part of the business system. Out of that, my dad was still alive and I solicited his help ad he made the first gift to the Nantucket Historic Trust (Beinecke Jr., 1998, p. 56).

At this time Nantucket had no zoning laws. The only regulations were provided under state legislature as a historic district and only provided little exterior architectural protection.

In order to achieve a business side of the non-profit Beinecke partnered with a man named Lawrence Miller,<sup>12</sup> a wealthy entrepreneur who also summered on Nantucket, and formed Sherburne Associates (Beinecke Jr., 1998). Miller became the financial backing for Sherburne Associates who's main goal of in effect was to gain control of the waterfront. The waterfront was of paramount importance to Beinecke and control of it was critical to execute his vision.

Beinecke firmly believed that the waterfront as it existed in the 1950s was neither historic nor attractive and therefore an economic disaster. The many industries that

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<sup>12</sup> Lawrence Miller was the heir to the Four Roses Whiskey Company

lined the waterfront made for a rusty, unsightly and generally unpleasant entrance way to Nantucket, rather a 'back door' approach Beinecke thought (Willard, 1974; Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998) By controlling the waterfront not only could he create a more attractive economically supported gateway to Nantucket but he would control could also ensure that the changes could be made in a sustainable way.

Now with his non-profit organization backed by a for profit business Beinecke was able to execute his goals through the 'system'. Beinecke continued to purchase property around the island to either conserve, preserve or restore the unique architectural assets of the community. In an open letter to his grandchildren Beinecke stated that he,

devoted many years and many dollars to help save Nantucket with its own special type of CPR, Conservation, Preservation and Restoration, and it has saved us from intentionally or unintentionally destroying irreplaceable assets both natural and manmade (Beinecke Jr., 2002).

Beinecke eventually controlled somewhere between 50 and 90 percent of the downtown area and actively fought to ensure that any alterations that occurred enhanced and helped build a cohesive look and feel that complimented the historic residential area (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Blake, 1968; Willard, 1974).

## CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### **Framework Development**

The United States experienced unprecedented economic prosperity and socio-cultural changes during the mid-century, post-World War II era that created an equally unprecedented demand for tourism (Cowan, 2007; Smith, 1998). Many cities and towns throughout the country faced development pressures as the economy began shifting away from industrialization towards a more service based one (Cowan, 2007; Smith, 1998). Like much of America, Nantucket, Massachusetts, an existing tourist destination, faced increased development pressures. This study examines Nantucket's history and growth from its Whaling Era to present day and focuses specifically on the Beinecke Era from about 1940 to 1970.

Walter Beinecke Jr., a wealthy entrepreneur, took a very active role in the development of Nantucket during this time and his actions helped alter the course of the island's history as a tourist destination. Informed by qualitative methodology, this thesis employs a case study approach to examine how historic preservation can be used as a tool for destination development, specifically for boutique tourist destinations. The case examined is the work of Walter Beinecke Jr. on Nantucket, Massachusetts.

The data collected for this research is qualitative which largely focuses on "words rather than numbers (quantitative)" (Creswell, 2014, p. 4). The research method is a case study. According to Gary Thomas, (2011, p. 9) "a case study is a focus on one thing, looked at in depth and from many angles." The method chosen for which to examine this case is a constant comparative method which derives themes from the research that captures or summarizes the essence of the data (Thomas, 2011) The

research examined includes interviews, oral histories, both public and private documents, and visual materials such as photographs and maps. Personal observation is intentionally left out of this study.

According to Thomas (2011, p. 170) “there are two parts to a case study: the subject and the analytical frame or object.” In the case of this study the analytical frame or object is examining how preservation can be used as a tool for destination development while the subject is Nantucket, Massachusetts and specifically the work of Walter Beinecke Jr. to preserve the island’s heritage. Following the requirement of a case study the aim of this research is to look at the topic in depth and from many angles. “The basic principle governing the process of constant comparison is that you emerge with themes that capture or summarize the essence of your data” (Thomas, 2011, p. 171) Therefore, a constant comparative method is employed to examine the qualitative data pertaining to the case.

“Tourism is by its very nature a multidisciplinary phenomenon” (Ritchie & Crouch, 2003), and therefore complex and challenging to examine on a specific basis. Due in part to this complexity, themes for this case study were selected after examining existing research, literature, and theories on destination development as a general subject as well as literature on the development of boutique and heritage destinations more specifically. This choice follows case study methodology which drives research from the broad to the specific (Creswell, 2014; Thomas, 2011).

The themes that arise from broad and all-encompassing tourist destination development literature are used as criteria for the case study examination. Within this study, two large themes are used as criteria for analysis: destination competitiveness

and sustainability and carrying capacity within the context of destination lifecycle. While complex, these two themes within tourism destination development literature share some underlying common aspects. The concept of Carrying Capacity derives from Butler's (1980) destination lifecycle model which outlines seven stages that destinations progress through throughout their life beginning with an exploration stage and ending with decline. Both themes are of constant importance throughout destination development literature and therefore inherently applicable to Nantucket as a case study of destination development.

Similarly, Ritchie and Crouch's (2003) Model for *Destination Competitiveness and Sustainability* serves as yet another overarching theme that will be used as a criteria for which to examine destinations as a whole. However, there are several smaller aspects of this model that are constant to the development of a boutique destination specifically such as carrying capacity. The two concepts in fact cannot be examined without one another as a destination which exceeds its carrying capacity cannot hope to sustain itself for long periods of time.

Transitioning from these broad themes this research examines three smaller and more specific themes that can be examined either as stand-alone concepts or within the context of both Carrying Capacity as it relates to Butler's life cycle model as well as Ritchie and Crouch's (2003) *Model for Destination Competitiveness and Sustainability*. The three themes used as criteria for analysis are: destination branding, uniqueness and sense of place. These themes are derived from examining boutique and heritage destination development literature more specifically.

These five themes: carrying capacity, destination competitiveness and sustainability, destination branding, uniqueness and sense of place are used as the criteria for which a constant comparative analysis of Walter Beinecke Jr's actions are examined:

### **Case Study Criteria**

**Destination Competitiveness and Sustainability-** According to Ritchie and Crouch (2003, p. 151), regardless of the type of tourism "there are, when all the rhetoric is stripped away, two primary parameters that must be satisfied if a destination is to be successful. They are competitiveness and sustainability." Destination competitiveness refers to a destinations ability to compete effectively and profitably in the tourism marketplace. Sustainability however refers to the ability of the destination to maintain the quality of its physical, social and environmental resources while competing within that market place. These two basic factors provide the basis for Ritchie and Crouch's Model which breaks down the aspects that create a competitive yet sustainable destination. Some of these factors considered within competitiveness are marketing and strategic planning for example. Similarly examples considered within a destination's sustainability involve commemorative integrity and visitor management.

Each of these for examples when examined at a fundamental level can also be referred to as image, destination positioning, uniqueness and carrying capacity. Ritchie and Crouch provide several other examples of aspects that should be considered when developing a sustainable yet competitive destination but these four examples were chosen to illustrate the most important aspects that pertain to Nantucket and are the ones used throughout this research.

**Carrying Capacity-** According to Butler (1980), regardless of the type of tourism, all destinations progress through a lifecycle much like the modern concept of a product lifecycle. This lifecycle centers around the idea that sales of a product proceed slowly at first, experience a rapid rate of growth, stabilize and subsequently decline following a basic asymptotic curve (Getz, 1992; Butler, 1980).

The tourist destination model follows the same basic asymptotic curve starting with exploration where destinations experience few visitor numbers and little tourist specific infrastructure. Then, as destinations grow, attract more visitors, develop tourist specific attractions or facilities and actively position themselves within the tourism market place they continue to progress through the involvement, development and consolidation phases. Finally destinations reach a defining and critical stage known as stagnation. This stage is characterized by the attainment of carrying capacity. While the existence and measurement of the concept is heavily debated by many researchers in the field, it is directly applicable to this case study on Nantucket and it is a topic for which Beinecke expressed explicit concern and will therefore be examined.

Carrying Capacity is the general concept that any destination has a maximum number of users, i.e. there is a point where the destination can no longer absorb more visitors. Identifying a specific numbers of users is rarely the goal of supporters of this concept but rather it is to identify a general saturation point. According to the model, if destinations continue to live outside of their carrying capacity they will eventually lead to a state of decline as the destination cannot sustain the volume. As destinations reach carrying capacity residents and visitors alike both begin to feel the negative impacts of tourism outweigh the positive. The long lines, congested roadways and inflation rates

are no longer worth the tourism revenue or the visit to the location. As this occurs visitors and residents begin to develop negative destination associations and begin to avoid the destination and the destination eventually enters a state of decline. Therefore, a destination hoping to be competitive yet sustainable must consider the concept of carrying capacity if it hopes to avoid decline (Butler, 1980; Getz, 1992; Ritchie & Crouch, 2003).

In short, following these two themes, regardless of type of tourism, a destination must be competitive and sustainable in order to succeed but also progresses through a lifecycle which has an attainable point of saturation. Again, these themes serve as larger criteria for destination development in general and provide scope for this examination, a specific examination is necessary as well.

Many scholars attempt to divide the tourism industry into different types in order to better examine it and while there are dozens of different types of tourism; i.e. mass, heritage tourism, adventure tourism, ecotourism etc., Temelkova and Bakalov (2015) agree that the global tourism industry is directly rooted in the intense competition between mass or all-inclusive tourism and tourism which is individually oriented and caters to a specific type of person. Therefore according to Temelkova and Bakalov (2015) the two basic types of tourism are mass and niche tourism, which refers to a destination that tailors its offerings to a specific market segment (Oprea, Lazin, & Martiuc, 2016; Temelkova & Bakalov, 2015).

Niche tourism can then be further broken down into the markets in which they target. Boutique tourism is one such market encompassed within niche tourism. The term 'Boutique' comes from the financial realm and is used to describe businesses that

specialize in certain aspects to remain competitive within the market. For example, a boutique bank “is one that specializes in one aspect of investment banking” (Cuypers, 2017). Therefore after an examination of Nantucket history and specifically its history within the tourism industry it can be subsequently defined as a boutique destination and is examined as such throughout the analysis.

Temelkova and Bakalov (2015) argue that boutique tourism is based on the personal approach to guests. It pays attention to the details and the uniqueness of not only the interior and exterior, but of the service as well. Temelkova and Bakalov (2015) state that boutique destinations also value exclusivity in terms of emotions and experiences. Furthermore, boutique destinations as a whole position themselves within a particular market segment that caters to a small number of wealthy tourists. Therefore, following boutique destination literature and Temelkova and Bakalov (2015) outline three important concepts for which boutique destinations focus upon: positioning themselves within the market; uniqueness; and ‘exclusivity in terms of emotions and experiences’, which can be examined as sense of place.

**Positioning-** In order to position a destination within a specific market segment there must be a brand to market. However marketing a destination, as opposed to a product poses a unique set of challenges. While items can be moved to a consumer, consumers must move to a destination and each destination may have hundreds of competitors; making it critical to develop an effective brand to market.

Steven Pike (2009) references several scholars<sup>1</sup> that suggest a lack of consistency in defining what constitutes destination branding, both within industry and

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<sup>1</sup> See (Anholt 2004; Blain, Levey & Ritchie, 2005; Park & Petrick, 2006; Tasci & Kozak, 2006)

within academia. While several definitions exist, Cia (2002, p. 726) offers a concise definition by stating that “destination branding can be defined as selecting a consistent element mix to identify and distinguish it through positive image building.” Qu, Kim & Im (2011) define it “as a way to communicate a destination’s unique identity by differentiating a destination from its competitors.” At this point a differentiation must be made between brand identity and brand image. While both are important aspects of branding the difference lies in perspective; the sender’s, and the receiver’s.

Brand identity is created by the sender whereas brand image is perceived by the receiver. Identity is what a destination creates and projects while the brand image is what the tourists perceives. Therefore to brand a destination, the destination, or ‘sender’, projects a brand identity through all the features and activities that differentiate it from its competitors while the tourists or ‘receivers’ perceive, form, and store an image of the destination in their minds (Qu, Kim, & Im, 2011).

**Uniqueness-** Uniqueness is the second critical concept that Temelkov and Bakalov (2015) argue plays a role in developing a successful boutique destination and as research shows, some scholars find inseparable from the first critical concept: destination positioning and branding. Qu et al. (2011) state that “contrary to common image, unique image is highlighted as a construct that envisages the overall image of a destination.” The idea of using uniqueness as a means to further examine destination imaging has been presented before. In 1991 and again in 1993 Echtner and Ritchie (1993) proposed that overall destination image should be measured using a three-dimensional continuum framework that allows for variation between six paired variables. One of these continuums allows for a spectrum type measurement of uniqueness. A

destination can therefore lie on one end and can be very unique or it can lie on the opposite end and be considered quite common.

Qu. et al (2011) maintains that uniqueness is particularly important due to its influence on differentiation among similar destinations in the target consumers' mind and as the purpose of branding is to differentiate a product from its competitors, uniqueness cannot be overlooked when examining destination image. Similarly the destination's identity should emphasize its uniqueness not only to reciprocate the notion, but to ensure the destination becomes differentiated from others in the minds of the consumers.

Cia (2002) reinforced similar reasoning for the inclusion of uniqueness as distinct brand association after completing a study on cooperative branding in rural destinations in which he concluded that "greater drawing power with an appealing brand name supported by consistent image building will allow communities to develop unique and distinct brand identities and establish a clear and competitive position in the rural tourism marketplace." Ultimately Cia (2002), Qu et al. (2011) and Echtner and Ritchie (1993) agree that uniqueness provides a compelling reason why travelers should select a particular destination over another.

These conclusions are further supported by Porter's 1980 business model which proposes three main strategies to outperform others in an industry (Porter, 1980). The first strategy, overall cost leadership, keeps businesses competitive by having the lowest costs. The second strategy, product differentiation, maintains that businesses can remain competitive by offering products or services that are perceived industrywide as being unique. The final strategy suggests that by targeting a particular buyer group

or market a business can achieve either cost leadership or product differentiation.

(Porter, 1980)

Porter's first two strategies for outperforming competitors mirror the strategies outlined Temelkova and Bakalov by Mass tourist destinations and Niche destinations. Following this logic boutique destinations in fact employ Porter's third strategy by targeting particular markets to achieve product differentiation. Upon examining the various reasons that researchers feel uniqueness is important to destinations it can be concluded that uniqueness is undoubtedly a contributing factor to destination branding and their positioning within the market. Uniqueness lies at the core of product differentiation and therefore becomes a primary concern to Boutique destinations.

**Sense of Place-** The third and final concept Temelkova and Bakalov elude to is sense of place. According to Roul, Adjizian and Auger (2016) in terms of tourism, sense of place is used to interpret the experience of tourists on recreational and tourism sites, but also, and perhaps above all, to analyze their relationships with local communities. The relationship between visitor and local community is essentially what Temelkova and Balkalov hope Boutique destinations will explore when they say "Boutique tourism is based on the personal approach... the exclusivity in terms of emotions and experiences during the tourists stay." (Temelkova & Bakalov, 2015)

Nanzer (2004) defines sense of place as "a concept that refers to the manner in which individuals relate or feel about places in which they live." This definition can then be easily applied to how tourists feel about the places they visit and eludes to the heart of a place, the emotion that a destination evokes. Sense of place is what visitors are describing when they say a destination is 'down to earth' or that a destination is 'quaint'.

Place is more than just a location on a map says Edward T. MaMahon, Author of “The Distinctive City” sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics- visual, cultural, social, and environmental- that provide meaning to a location (McMahon, 2012).

In conclusion, the proposed case study analysis is informed by current literature on the development of tourist destinations, specifically boutique destinations that rely on, their unique assets such as their heritage to differentiate themselves within the marketplace. The five concepts identified and discusses are: competitiveness and sustainability, carrying capacity, destination positioning, uniqueness, and sense of place and are critical components in developing a boutique heritage destination. These concepts will be applied to the work of Walter Beinecke, Jr. on Nantucket, Massachusetts as he worked to use the development of a specific type of tourism to support and finance historic preservation on the island.

## CHAPTER 4 AN EXAMINATION OF THE CASE

### **Walter Beinecke, Jr on Nantucket, Massachusetts**

Nantucket has a long history and it is clear today from visiting the island that the community is very proud of this history. The town and island alike are made up of hundreds of colonial era historic properties in which of dozens of organizations, non-profits, and government offices are dedicated to preserving. While the community has always had a strong pride for their prosperous and globally influential Whaling Era, the built heritage of this time was threatened during the socioeconomic events of the mid-twentieth century.

This time period was characterized by rapid development and movement of thought, people, and technologies throughout the country. This new development in existing cities often centered on catering to visitors and many older historic properties and structures were torn down to make way for this new infrastructure. Many cities and towns throughout the country focused their development on tourism in hopes of bringing tourism dollars to the struggling inner cities after the 'white middle class exodus' to the suburbs during the 1950s and 1960s. (Cowan, 2007; Smith, 1998)

The National Preservation Act of 1966 was born as a reaction to this rampant development. This brought many local preservation efforts validation on a national level with new federal laws and statutes. As travel and tourism grew during this time period the country seemed to shrink and communities began to rethink their 'brand image' by focusing on the unique aspects that differentiated them from other tourism destinations competitors. Heritage tourism became an increasingly popular type of tourism during this time period. The United States had been involved in three major wars within the last

100 years by the end of the 1950s and thousands of family members traveled near and far to pay homage to memorials and gravesites around the country. Many people from the Midwest and Northeast had migrated to the Southwest during this time period that a trend of 'visiting the mother land' back home in the Northeast for the holidays became popular. Heritage travel was a new and booming types of industry that competed alongside and often times as part of the other popular tourism industries at the time.

While Nantucket is a small island 30 miles off the coast of Cape Cod, Massachusetts it was not unlike many of these large cities that cut themselves off from their waterfronts during the first half of the nineteenth century during the period of industrialization. Similarly, Nantucket did not evade the national trend of turning to tourism to compensate the deindustrialization period of the following decades. However, Nantucket always seemed to face these trends earlier than the country as a whole. For example, Nantucket had been encouraging and striving towards preservation for at least a decade before the national preservation movement and the island had a long history of welcoming visitors before tourism became a national craze.

The island was dedicated as a local historic district in 1955 and less than a decade later Walter Beinecke, Jr. was heading the preservation efforts through the Nantucket Historical Trust, a foundation-type entity he established with his father. Beinecke's early efforts on the island were based solely in historic preservation. However, he soon noticed the potential for tourism in the new postwar economy. While many of the cities throughout the country began redeveloping their cities to cater to tourism Beinecke hoped to reverse this role. His goal was to develop tourism and tailor it to service his preservation goals. Instead of completely redeveloping the island,

Beinecke's primary goal was to preserve its identity and large collection of late eighteenth through mid-nineteenth century buildings. However, as an entrepreneur, he redeveloped specific aspects of the town in order for tourism to actively finance his preservation efforts.

This chapter analyzes some of the methods that Walter Beinecke, Jr. employed to preserve and redefine Nantucket while establishing it as a boutique tourist destination. The five criteria discussed in the previous chapter are used to analyze Beinecke's work. This discussion of the criteria begins with the smaller themes and concludes with the larger and more complex themes.

### **Uniqueness**

Uniqueness is a critical aspect and area of much focus throughout the tourism industry. Tourism destinations obsess over their uniqueness because what makes them unique is exactly what distinguishes them from other destinations.

In the case of heritage tourism, destinations establish uniqueness by showcasing their history in an attempt to attract visitors. While no other destination can recreate the specific history of another place, there are several areas that share common histories. For example, several places throughout the world that relied upon whaling for the main source of economic income. However, there is only one place that was and still is known as the whaling capitol of the world.

Not only is Nantucket unique because it was known as the whaling capitol of the world but it is also unique because it is home to one of the largest collections of Colonial Era buildings in the United States. This architecture is a tangible reflection of the prosperous whaling period. The combination of these two traits, along with the many other assets of Nantucket as an island creates a one-of-a-kind and irreplaceable tourist

destination that is difficult to recreate or imitate elsewhere. Heritage tourism relies on this critical fact the world over and is something that Beinecke realized early on. "Every community can find a marketable distinction in its own history" (Beinecke Jr., 1999, p. 19). He called the residential district of Nantucket "a true national asset" and realized the importance and potential benefits of preserving the unique and well intact history.

By creating the Nantucket Historical Trust Beinecke wanted to help ensure the protection of the island's historic properties. One of the first actions of the newly created non-profit organization was to purchase a historic home on Main Street, just outside of the commercial district, to prevent it from being turned into a commercial tap room.

Beinecke recalled in his oral history that

a couple of us felt that it was a terrible mistake to let the downtown business start expanding up into that very beautiful residential district but we had no legal basis for stopping it, so we used just plain economic clout, we bought it" (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 59).

At this early stage in his involvement on Nantucket Beinecke realized the importance of maintaining the Island's historic treasures, not necessarily for tourism's sake but instead to maintain the look, feel, and unique character of the island.

The interactions between the built environment and the residents and visitors had become so common place and deep rooted that they were a part of the Island's identity. For example, Beinecke purchased the American Legion building to prevent it from being torn down. The American Legion building, while old and deteriorating, was where all the children went to see Santa Clause every year and where several of the town meetings happened. The loss of this building would have left a void in the hearts of the residents.

In effect, Beinecke was concerned with preserving not simply the built environment but also the island's sense of place.

### **Sense of Place**

Nanzer (2004) defines sense of place as "a concept that refers to the manner in which individuals relate or feel about places in which they live." This definition can be easily applied to how tourists feel about the places they visit and eludes to the emotion that a destination evokes. Place is more than just a location on a map says Edward T. MaMahon, Author of "The Distinctive City." A sense of place is a unique collection of qualities and characteristics- visual, cultural, social, and environmental that provide meaning to a location.

Beinecke realized that Nantucket's built environment was a physical representation of the island's culture and its social values. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the most prominent religion on the island was Quakerism. One of the most important sociocultural traits that Quakerism left behind, even after it faded from fashion during the Whaling Era, was social equality. For example, many racial minorities left mainland American to work on Nantucket based whaling vessels as they were able to gain respect and earn good wages through a strong work ethic. The culture of social equality also applied to women on the island. (Philbrick, 1993)

Many Nantucket women were highly educated for their time. Many women owned land in their own names and even operated as heads the households being able to conduct businesses outside of the house hold, a job typical reserved for men during this time period. However this unusual independence was brought about partially out of necessity as so many of the men were at sea for months or even years on end, the women had no choice but to maintain the household. (Philbrick, 1993)

Quaker belief such as equality and humility eventually became subtly visible throughout the island's architecture and imbedded within its culture. The equality on the island led to the construction of one of the first African American meeting houses in the country. Built in 1827 the Boston Higginbotham House is still standing today (Figure 1). Similarly, even during the height of the whaling era Nantucket architecture never became as opulent as the mainland due to the Quaker influence and value of humility. The island had its own style so much that it even had its own style of house. The typical Nantucket (Figure 2) became a common style on the island and makes up a large portion of the historic residential district.

Similarly Beinecke understood the importance of maintaining a certain level of visual cohesiveness that reinforced and complimented the culture and the social values. The visual character of Nantucket became of great importance to Beinecke's efforts on Nantucket. After beginning the Nantucket Historical Trust he realized that he could not accomplish all of his preservation goals solely through a non-profit. Beinecke realized that his preservation efforts needed economic support. After years of experience within the business world Beinecke also knew that if his efforts were to succeed in the long term, they needed to benefit the community in some way.

### **Competitiveness and Sustainability**

During the middle of the twentieth century, the nation's tourism industry began to recover after years of economic depression and war. The postwar environment gave Americans unprecedented mobility and it was evident that "Americans were on the road in their 'Tin Lizzies', escaping to the countryside via highways" (Smith, 1998). While Nantucket had been experiencing tourism by the wealthy elite since the end of the 1800s it was only a matter of time before the vast scores of tourists of mainland tourists

reached Nantucket. It was widely known that Nantucket while so far out to sea, never escaped the trends of nation and especially the trends of Cape Cod. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998; Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1979)

By the late 1960s, domestic tourism had become so prominent that the state of Massachusetts teamed together with the federal government to conduct a report on the effects of tourism within the state. The federal government paid eighty-five percent of the report, the state paid ten and each county was supposed to pay five percent. Nantucket was the only county in the state that did not participate, but the theory was that the arbitrage between Cape Cod and Nantucket was quite constant. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998; Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1979)

Beinecke and other members of the community became convinced that Nantucket was going to be put under a great deal of development pressure. While the community as a whole had a more laissez-faire view of the development, Beinecke felt that preemptive measures were needed to ensure the development that did happen was beneficial for the island.

While many people felt that things ought to be left alone and to just take whatever happens, some, like myself, felt, while you could not stop the path of what the country usually calls progress, you can at least influence it, if you prepared for it. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 55)

With no zoning laws to prevent large scale development, Beinecke feared that Nantucket could turn into a Coney Island amusement park. Beinecke realized that uncontrolled growth on the Island could severely damage not only the historic

architecture, but could also damage the culture, and the island's sense of place – its primary resource for generating tourism and bolstering the local economy. It was during this time that Beinecke decided to begin heavily influencing the inevitable progress on Nantucket. He states in his oral history that at this time “My commercial life, my instincts, and my background were sales. You can call it marketing, or you can call it merchandising, or you can call it entrepreneurship, but I saw opportunities to do things” (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 55).

Beinecke realized that even though he had a strong internal drive for historic preservation these pursuits needed to be sustainable, including economically sustainable:

...so many of these things you cannot do to the extent that your enthusiasm would like you to do, just on charity. You go around and pass a tin cup and say, I represent a worthy purpose, will you not throw something into the cup? My experience is that the needs usually are always greater than the cup. So you have to think about that and come up with some approach to get more leverage, more help. Well ours is a profit motivated economy... It just makes sense to me that what you try to do is fit your program into that system, rather than being an exception and just existing on the charitable dregs that people will throw off; try to fit your purpose into the system.

In the case of historic preservation, which was kind of the direction my interest in Nantucket took, it meant that you had to find some pattern where you make people support the goals of historic preservation, not just because they were being a nice guy but because it was going to be to their advantage. They were going to get something for themselves out of it. Most people have to spend their lives taking care of themselves and the people closest to them. If you want them to participate in something that is outside of their first priority they have to get some benefit out of it... Being specific at a place like Nantucket, you have a man that wants to put up a neon sign to advertise his beer parlor, you have to find a way of showing him that he will have more prosperity, he will sell more beer, his life will be easier and better if he does not put up the neon sign. Walter Beinecke Jr. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998, p. 51)

Beinecke drew on the social connections around him to figure out a way to help preserve Nantucket and protect its history and character. During his time Beinecke was serving as president of a local community hospital near his home in New Jersey and had become close with the vice-president, Don McClean, a former advisor to the Rockefeller Brothers and a member of their staff. After learning of Beinecke's interests, McClean introduced Beinecke to Kenneth Chorley who was in charge of some of the Rockefeller's important interests including Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia.

Beinecke met with Chorley and explained his hopes, fears, and aspirations for Nantucket. While Beinecke hoped to conduct charitable endeavors through historic preservation on Nantucket he realized that for preservation and active destination development to happen simultaneously, the community needed to be involved in a manner beyond pure charity. The type of sensitive development Beinecke wanted needed to benefit them in some way and he envisioned employing a method similar to that of Colonial Williamsburg.

Chorley explained the intricate and symbiotic relationship between the Colonial Williamsburg Incorporated foundation, which received tax breaks under the charter with the State of Virginia, and the commercial aspects of Colonial Williamsburg which are run as tax paying private enterprises.

This is the thing that I was trying to envision here on Nantucket, the concept that anything you want to do that goes beyond the tin cup has to be part of the business system. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998).

Beinecke then partnered with a man named Lawrence Miller,<sup>1</sup> a wealthy entrepreneur who also summered on Nantucket, and formed Sherburne Associates. Miller became the financial backing for Sherburne Associates whose main goal was to redevelop the waterfront as a boat basin. The waterfront was of paramount importance to Beinecke and control of it was critical to execute his vision.

Beinecke firmly believed that the historic whaling waterfront as it existed in the 1950s was mostly derelict and no longer attractive or economically viable. The many industries that lined the waterfront made for an unsightly and generally unpleasant entry point for visitors to Nantucket. For Beinecke, the waterfront seemed more a back door than a front one. (Willard, 1974; Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998) By controlling the waterfront not only could he create a more attractive gateway to Nantucket, he could also control ensure that the changes were made in an economically sustainable way. However with tourism well on the rise nationwide, Beinecke decided to use this to his advantage. Beinecke knew that change was inevitable but hoped to tailor this change to preserve Nantucket's historic assets and reinforce the island's sense of place. Beinecke felt that if Nantucket was to compete within any tourism market it needed a strong visual appeal and currently the main entry to Nantucket was through the industrialized waterfront area.

The first goal and order of business for Sherburne Associates became to rehabilitate the waterfront area into a more welcoming and tourists friendly entrance to the Island. The waterfront became of critical importance to Beinecke for several reasons. Primarily, the visual aspect. In order to remain competitive among tourist

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<sup>11</sup> Lawrence Miller was the heir to the Four Roses Whiskey Company

destinations Nantucket had to make a positive lasting first impression. Beinecke wanted to begin building and reinforcing Nantucket's sense of place that centered upon its character as an island destination and its history within the Whaling Era. Secondly Beinecke wanted control of the waterfront because he felt that there were several opportunities not only to control the flow of traffic in and out of the island but also an opportunity to create a sustainable source of revenue for the island to thrive off of.

Beinecke set to work soon after establishing Sherburne Associates. His first order of business to ensure Nantucket became a competitive yet sustainable tourist destination was to purchase the White Elephant a waterfront hotel just outside of industrialized area. Secondly he purchased Straight Warf for its strategic location and third was to build a boat basin, or marina. Each of these major moves completed a different strategic task that Beinecke felt important to the survival and preservation efforts of Nantucket. Purchasing the several hotels, specifically the White Elephant which allowed him to influence the destinations image. Purchasing Straight Warf allowed him control of the aspects of capacity on the island and building the boat basin reinforced the island's sense of place while constructing a competitive yet sustainable tourist attraction that provided economic backing to the preservation efforts around town.

### **Destination Positioning**

Beinecke's main goal was to preserve Nantucket's built environment in order to reinforce and maintain the island's sense of place, while increasing boutique tourism. Beinecke knew that the Island boasted the largest collection of Colonial Era buildings in one location and felt that this was truly 'a national asset' (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998). However due to the destruction of

the commercial and waterfront districts during the great fire of 1848 many of these Colonial Era buildings were outside of the commercial and industrial parts of the town. The majority of buildings that occupied downtown area during the 1950s and 1960s were constructed during the second half of the nineteenth century if not in the early nineteenth century and consequently were of a different architectural style. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998; Lancaster, 1993; Massachusetts Historical Commission, 1979)

Beinecke purchased the White Elephant Hotel in June of 1962. At the time it was the second largest hotel on the island containing ninety guest rooms and nine cottages. However, the location, not the size of the hotel was what interested Beinecke most. Built in the early 1900s the White Elephant (Figure 3) was the only hotel with a direct connection to Nantucket Harbor and was therefore visible from the ferries and other locations along the waterfront.

Beinecke had a distinct goal of preserving Nantucket but was selective of what he chose to preserve. Beinecke's criteria for preservation seems twofold: their success as an economic venture and their ability to reinforce the island's sense of place. The island's main source of pride and notoriety throughout the world had been its Whaling Era and Beinecke felt that a consistent and cohesive representation of this era would make Nantucket more desirable to visitors. The White Elephant, being one of the first buildings you saw when pulling into port at that time needed to be economically successful and consistent with the historic district.

The White Elephant having been built in the early 1900s was a Victorian style architecture building which was not consistent with the visual representation of the

Whaling Era that Beinecke wished to make a tourist attraction. For that reason, Beinecke chose to tear down the White Elephant and build anew while retaining the same name. The newly constructed building gave every room a view of the harbor and floor to ceiling windows in the main dining area. The hotel was meant to be a beachside resort with the convenience of being just blocks from downtown. Within a few years Sherburne Associates purchased The Breakers (Figure 4) a hotel just a few lots to the east of the White Elephant. This building was torn down and the newly constructed bearing the same name became an annex of the White Elephant. (Lancaster, 1993; Willard, 1974)

While the circumstance of the White Elephant is completely opposite the values of historic preservation and the actions were in stark contrast to what occurred at the Jared Coffin House just a few blocks away. The three story brick structure (Figure 5) stood just three blocks from the center of town and at the time of its construction during the late Whaling Era it was the largest private residence on the island. Shortly after the property was completed the great fire destroyed the downtown area. While the brick structure was unscathed, and in fact aided in halting the spread of flames, the allure of living in downtown Nantucket quickly faded and the owners moved to Boston. The house was sold just two years after it was completed and became the Ocean House, the preeminent hotel of the town for many years but fell into decline with the rest of the community during the late 1800s. The hotel eventually served as barracks for the Navy during WWII but returned to private ownership after the war. (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Lancaster, 1993)

The hotel never recovered and a few years later was on the market. Even though the structure was economically harmful to the town it was the largest private residence ever built on the island during the Whaling Era and was one of the most iconic structures in the downtown area. Beinecke felt the structure was a vital part of the islands culture and with the Nantucket Historical Trust decided to purchase the building and restore it.

The restoration of the building required considerable effort. Many of the historic labor skills required to restore the building to its original states were no longer practiced on the Island. The Historical Trust took it upon themselves to teach some of these skills, like plaster casting and antique furniture restoration to local residents. The Trust purchased used antique furniture from around the New England area and brought it to Nantucket to be refinished by local trade students. The Trust took a similar course of action with women's handicrafts such as weaving and needlework, as well.

Beinecke hoped to make guests feel like they were going back in time when they stayed at the Jared Coffin House. This unique experience added value to the hotel by providing a one-of-a-kind experience for visitors to feel as though they had been transported back to Whaling Era Nantucket. To accomplish this goal Beinecke enlisted the interior design expertise of William Pahlmann, the 'Million Dollar Decorator'. Pahlmann was well known by wealthy New Yorkers for his eclectic designs that payed homage to traditional designs while providing contemporary comfort and luxury. His notoriety with the New York elite and his vision to recreate the "romance, glamour and adventure of America's whaling days complimented and aligned perfectly with Beinecke's goal of attracting wealthy clientele to the island (Hylton).

Simultaneously Sherburne Associates had been reconstructing several downtown shops in a colonial style fashion to better fit within the destination image. These new shops were leased to new local tradesmen and artisans which created a unique, historic-looking boutique style shopping area within the heart of downtown. Slowly the redefined commercial area began to prosper as more and more tourism came to the Island. The commercial and residential area now had a cohesive Colonial Era feel that created a consistent element mix to present to tourists. Furthermore, local handicrafts and wares lined the picturesque cobblestone streets that could not be purchased anywhere else in the New England area. Not only had Beinecke redesigned the look of the commercial area but he also provided jobs for the community and began securing the island's unique character to create a constant and cohesive image for tourists enjoy.

In effect Beinecke was creating a holistic destination brand that focuses on Colonial Era whaling Nantucket. He perpetuated this brand by ensuring that the built environment reinforced this image and that the services offered catered to the historic charm of the area. When referencing back to the literature Cia (2002) states that "destination branding can be defined as selecting a consistent element mix to identify and distinguish it through positive image building." When examining Beinecke's actions it seems that his is exactly the goal he was attempting to achieve. He hoped to create a distinct image in the minds of visitors of Nantucket as this Colonial Era whaling capital and did everything in his power to consistently reinforce this image. Now that Beinecke had developed a distinct and unique brand to market within the tourism industry he

hoped to better position himself within the market place and attract a specific type of tourist.

Beinecke worked hard to preserve the historic infrastructure and sense of place on Nantucket and moving forward he wanted to ensure his efforts were sustainable. However after seeing the Massachusetts Historical Commission report on tourism he realized that the industry was going to continue to grow. Now that he had taken measures to ensure the type of development was sensitive and complimentary to the existing culture and landscape he wanted to make sure that the visitors coming to Nantucket shared a similar set of values and would appreciate Nantucket for its historic character.

### **Carrying Capacity**

Of the many changes Walter Beinecke made to Nantucket one of the most influential was through the purchase of Straight Warf. Nantucket had three wharfs, South Wharf, Commercial or Swains Warf and Straight Warf which extended directly from Main Street. After purchasing The White Elephant Walter Beinecke was able to “merge his interest with the two principal local waterfront owners- The Harbor Fuel Company and the Island Service Company which together owned two of the wharves and the tank farm” (Willard, 1974, p. 102) After the Harbor Fuel Company ‘sold out’ the remaining company Island Service Company merged with Beinecke to officially form Sherburne Associates.

Sherburne Associates continued purchasing property along with waterfront but of principal important was gaining control of Straight Warf. Straight Warf was where the commercial passenger liners loaded and unloaded and at the time the boat from the Cape Cod town of Hyannis docked once a day bringing with it roughly 1,800

passengers. (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Willard, 1974) Many of the passengers were regional tourists who came to the island for the day more commonly referred to as 'day trippers'. Due to the brevity of their visit, day trippers usually consume free attractions such as beaches, self-guided tours and walking trails while at the same time requiring access to public facilities such as restrooms, bathing facilities, and water fountains. These types of tourists rarely provide much economic benefit towards the destinations they visit as they typically only purchase one meal while at the destination, do not require lodging, visit free attractions while still consuming and using public facilities.

This type of high volume and low expenditure visitor is not conducive for a heritage tourism destinations as historic properties typically can't vast numbers of visitors while their cost to maintain can be astronomical. Heritage tourism therefore aligns more closely with a boutique tourism model where the destination actively attracts few numbers of high spending visitors.

Beinecke realized that Nantucket, being an island destination, had a finite number of resources and did not have an infinite capacity to absorb visitors but still hoped to achieve high profit margins. In a 1974 interview with Yankee Magazine Beinecke described the unique circumstance by saying:

Our history since the late 1880s has been a dependence on tourism and if the economy is marginal, as ours has been, there is a tendency to seek added volume to provide more income... But that philosophy is self-defeating in circumstances such as ours because all our quantities here are finite-you can't expand indefinitely; you have to accept the fact that it's a small island (Willard, 1974, p. 101)

Beinecke's solution to this problem was simple: control Straight Warf and you controlled the gateway to the city. The contract with the boat company rested with

property deed and when Sherburne Associates purchased the land they also inherited the 15 year contract. The contract predated Sherburne Associates so Beinecke's strategy was simple, to outlive the contract and then renegotiate the terms. (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Willard, 1974)

Once the contract expired Sherburne Associates renegotiated a lease. The new lease demanded that the company raise the price of their tickets and used faster boats with a capacity of only 500 passengers. (Beinecke Jr., 1998; Willard, 1974) Through this new contract Beinecke took direct control of the number of visitors coming to the island and with the increased cost to reach the island he also changed the type of person that wanted to visit. While his strategy was mistaken by many as a means of keeping out the average individual his actions were purely motivated by preservation. The delicate nature of the Island's resources demanded a limitation on the number of tourists it could accommodate.

By purchasing Straight Warf Beinecke also inherited the local tour bus contract similar to the way he inherited the boat contract. The tour buses at this time used old school buses as a means of touring visitors around the island. However due to the size of the boats they could not navigate the narrow cobble stone roads of the historic district and so many of historic sites were left off the tour. Instead the tour circumvented the island on the major thoroughfares and featured a stop at the airport.

In a similar case with the ferries, Beinecke renegotiated the bus contract to raise the price of tickets and employ smaller buses that carried 28 passengers instead of 50. (Beinecke Jr., Nantucket Preservation Institute Oral History Collection, 1998) He also required that the new route stop at a variety of historic locations managed by the

Nantucket Historical Association. This strategy, increased the traffic to money making sites such as the Whaling Museum, ensured that visitor numbers stayed at a manageable level while providing an 'entirely different experience'. "Now it is perfectly true the customer pays more" Beinecke stated in his Oral History, "but they are getting an entirely different value; they see historic Nantucket now" (Beinecke Jr., 1998, p. 65) Beinecke's long term goals of preserving the island was then aided and accomplished through this strategic use of his commercial assets. By controlling the wharves Beinecke was able to control the number of visitors to the island and cut the number down by more than half.

However simply minimizing visitors to the island could not have accomplished his dreams and preservation and maintaining historic properties is not cheap. The luxurious restoration of the Jarid Coffin House and reimagining of the shopping and commercial area allowed him to attract a wealthier type of visitor. Still Beinecke did not aim to attract your average tourist who hoped to purchase a few new t-shirt. Beinecke aimed to attract the highest spending tourist possible, those who stayed longest and invested in the island to sustain them entirely while here.

In a 1968 interview with LIFE Magazine he stated that he hoped to attract those people "who come on their private boats and spend money on antiques, groceries and quality gifts" (Blake, 1968, p. 49). However in order to bring people on private boats the island needed a place for these people to dock and at the time the island not have a private boat house. Now that Beinecke had introduced a level of exclusivity to the island by established visitation limits and the island now showcased a cohesive and consistent

historic charm, he was ready to begin attracting the type of high spending tourist he hoped to host and set to work on constructing a private marina.

Beinecke enlisted the help of an expert to advise him on where to put the marina and how to build one. The report concluded that the ideal location for the new marina would be on the cheap marsh land on the edge of the harbor as the project would undoubtedly require a considerable amount of dredging and excavation to construct a sturdy bulkhead that could withstand the constant pressure changes of the tides. However Beinecke's sales and marketing instincts urged him otherwise. To ease his second thoughts Beinecke hired a second consultant who concluded the same as the first; the ideal location for a marina would be on the cheap marshlands outside of the harbor and downtown area.

However Walter did not want just any marina. Beinecke envisioned a place of luxury and convenience that catered to a wealthy boat owner. Feeling that his visitors would be inconvenienced by having to take a taxi into town in order to restock and refuel their boats and purchase groceries Beinecke realized that any new marina needed to provide every convenience and luxury that boat owners had come to expect. Rejecting the advice of his consultants Beinecke decided to construct a marina in the heart of downtown and chose to use the title Boat Basin instead of marina to evoke the feel of a real port (Figure 6). Beinecke also allowed commercial fishing and lobster boats to dock within the marina to give the basin an authentic old style port feel. To add to this quaint and authentic feel Beinecke concealed all the modern conveniences behind traditional materials. While every slip was fully equipped with running water, 24 hour telephone service, cable TV plugs, 220 electric service and hook-able sewer, none

of the basin was finished in concrete or steel. Instead the entire basin was built using as many of the materials and structures of the old fisherman's sheds that lined the wharves and all new replica materials constructed of wood. The boat basin opened in 1968 accommodated 225 boats and fit seamlessly in with the look and feel of the historic and quaint downtown.

Beinecke recalled in a later interview that the yachts seemed to arrive immediately and entrepreneurs began following suit. The boat basin brought new economic opportunities for high end shop and restaurant owners to target and market to the wealthy visitors. In the first six years of the basin's existence the average boat length increased by two feet. He stated in a 1974 interview with Yankee Magazine that:

When they first started coming, most boats were 35 feet or so feet long; now they're in the high 40s. Once in a while we get one or two 200-footers, and they take up the space of three or four smaller boats. Those boats are worth about 1,500 a foot my dock master says. On a single evening last year we counted \$18 million in boats tied up in the basin (Willard, 1974, p. 104).

The boat basin became the cherry on top' for the island solidifying its status as a premier boutique tourist destination. This was the kind of affluence that Walter Beinecke counted on to sustain Nantucket's economy and preservation efforts. With yachtsmen and hotel visitors alike being within walking distance of the grocery store, unique shopping, fine dining and scenic vistas the small town of Nantucket offered a holistic, all-inclusive vacation package for the wealthy elite Nantucket.

## CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION

Today Nantucket Ranks as one of the top Island destinations in the United States and attracts over 400,000 visitors annually (Barnard, 2017; Beinecke Jr., 1998). The island is now listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural and historical significance in the global whaling era industry during the 1800s. This prosperous time period attracted prominent socialites of the era who added to the islands wealth and notoriety. However through a combination of advancing technologies and an unfortunate and devastating fire, the island's whaling industry met a sharp and drastic decline during the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The island fell into a depression for over 50 years until wealthy families of the New England area began using the quaint fishing cottages within the town of Sconset as summer cottages. This renewed interest in the island brought about a subtle change within the island's economy by importing goods and materials to sustain the residents and visitors of the Island. Like other American cities before it Nantucket used the convenience and ease of its waterfront property to drive profitable industry but at the same time, created an unsightly gateway to the island.

The island continued to entertain a small number of tourists until the mid-1900s when a variety of factors during the post WWII economic climate allowed for tourism to take place on a much larger scale. Legislative acts like the GI Bill and National Highway Act provided the tools for the middle class to experience unprecedented wealth and mobility. More Americans than ever before owned a family vehicle and had the means to take vacation. This in combination with the new highway system made road trips the most popular type of vacation and as people began leaving the cities for more scenic

and wide open areas of the country developers and entrepreneurs followed suit. New residential areas, known as suburbs, were constructed outside of the city limits to accommodate the heightened demand for housing. The housing boom turned into all out urban sprawl and as more and more families continued to leave the cities for homes in rural new development areas. As a result, inner cities faced a period of decline and deindustrialization as industries left to start new offices in more popular areas.

Inner cities began taking note of the popularity in tourism and tried to use tourism as their new source of economic input. Nantucket Island encountered a similar trend and began ferrying thousands of tourists a day to experience the sun sand and sea of the island. However a young entrepreneur and long-time Nantucket summer resident, Walter Beinecke Jr. noticed that the large influx of people put a strain on the delicate historic infrastructure of the island. Furthermore, he realized that being an island destination large numbers of visitors could quickly consume and deplete the few resources they had.

Since the decline of the whaling era Nantucket had not had the financial support to redevelop like many larger American cities and consequently the island retained a great number of colonial era buildings. These buildings, built by ship captains, merchants and socialites of the time had a character that was unique and distinct from the mainland colonial era buildings. The Quaker influence on the island yielded less ornate and more modest structures than much of the wealthy mainland cities during that time. Consequently Nantucket developed a totally unique style of architecture, and event its own style of house, the Typical Nantucket that beautifully illustrated the history of the island. By the mid-1950s many of these buildings had seen little alterations and

the majority of them remained intact. Those like Walter Beinecke Jr. felt that the history of Nantucket was imbedded within its built environment and felt a strong internal urge to preserve that sense of place.

However as the island continued to bring more and more visitors it began facing development pressures. Walter Beinecke Jr. made it a personal mission to preserve the architecture of the island and even went so far as to buy a colonial era residence out from underneath a competitor to prevent it from becoming a tap room. Beinecke Jr. had a long family history of entrepreneurship and had been raised to work within the American capitalist system to become a successful businessman. Because of this, he realized that preservation solely as an endeavor of charity would likely become a long and arduous uphill battle constantly relying on the never ending need for donations and the good will of others. Instead of facing this battle he decided to turn his goal of preserving the island into an economically independent and sustainable business and like many other cities through the United States, he turned to tourism to do so.

Through his own personal investments and business enterprises Beinecke was able to purchase dozens of structures and land on and near the waterfront area of downtown Nantucket. Beinecke envisioned redefining Nantucket from a day-tripper sun, sand and sea destination to a high end luxurious, heritage tourism destination. This vision accomplished two goals in Beinecke's mind. By catering to and actively attracting wealthy visitors Beinecke could create an economically driven industry on the island that not only produced revenue but also attracted a population which could appreciate and sustain his preservation movement.

After gaining control of the managing properties that controlled the local buses and ferries, Beinecke renegotiated contracts to address his major concerns of the island's capacity, image and sustainability. Beinecke renegotiated with the ferries to raise their prices and reduce the number of visitors brought to the island on a daily basis. This ensured the island's delicate resources would not become overused and damaged. Similarly, he renegotiated with the bus companies to use smaller buses that were able to navigate the city's historic buildings in order to better highlight the unique and historic aspects of the community. He also made special requirements that increased tourist traffic specifically to money generating historic properties such as the whaling museum. These two alterations while increasing the cost, added a quality and value to the services like never before while simultaneously highlighting, supporting and financing that preservation movement on the island.

His goals of preserving the islands history, charm and sense of place were further aided by his efforts to redefine several properties along and near the waterfront to showcase a unique and cohesive image towards newly arriving tourists. Through both new construction with sensitive and place appropriate design and large scale historic restoration efforts Beinecke provided visitors with a variety of high quality and well thought out attractions. His restoration of the Jared Coffin house allowed guests to take a step back in time during their stay in one of the largest private residences built during the whaling era and was situated just on the edge of town, next to all the stores and shops. Conversely, his reconstruction of the White Elephant provided guests with a scenic view of the harbor and newly constructed boat basin while providing them the amenities of a beach resort.

He further positioned himself within the boutique destination marketplace by constructing an amenity filled boat basin that could compete on a national scale in luxury and amenities but at the same time offered a one-of-a-kind, authentic, fishing port experience in the heart of the historic downtown area. He ensured that any new construction, either within the boat basin or at one of his commercial properties, fit both visually and economically within the colonial era image that he wished to preserve and showcase to the world as a high end heritage tourism destination.

It is clear today that Beinecke succeeded in his venture of preserving Nantucket's historic properties and showcasing the island as a boutique heritage destination. The island is listed by Travel Magazine as one of the top island destinations in American and is listed as a district on the National Register of Historic Places. Today the island is visited by over 400,000 people annually with the visitor's center alone welcoming over 65,000 visitors a year. Furthermore, to this day the town of Nantucket alone boasts over 900 properties that were built before the Civil War. Many of these properties are still extant due in large part to the preservation mindset that Walter Beinecke Jr. instilled within the community's mindset on Nantucket.

After his re-envisioning of the commercial district and downtown area Beinecke focused his efforts not only on physical built environment preservation efforts but also on public education and environmental preservation as well. Walter Beinecke Jr. had a deep seeded appreciation for the Island, not only as a unique architectural treasure but also as a beautiful natural resource. Part of the quaint charm stems from the preservation of roughly fifty percent of undeveloped, natural landscape and the tasteful consideration of historic streetscapes and landscaping. (Beinecke Jr., 1998)

During the late 1960's Nantucket had several teams from various universities around the country come to the island to conduct Historic American Build Surveys (HABS) in order to create detailed documentation of the historic properties on the Island. One of these teams was headed by University of Florida professor of architecture, Blair Reeves. Reeves also taught at the National Park Service for the Department of Interior and was the Charmian of the National Trust's education efforts. Reeves had been redesigning the federal specifications of what was considered and recorded during an official HABS report. At the time buildings were analyzed individually but Mr. Reeves felt that this method did not capture the entire story of a building, i.e. it doesn't provide a holistic picture, and felt that streetscapes and landscaping needed to be included within the report.

Walter learned a great deal from Mr. Reeves about the preservation and consideration of 'the larger picture' and the two felt an ongoing educational program for preservation could benefit Nantucket in the long run. In 1972 the two decided to open a formal preservation institute called the Preservation Institute: Nantucket. Beinecke served as a financial supporter and local social connection and also helped the University of Florida secure a temporary and eventually permanent classroom space. Beinecke knew the school would contribute to the ongoing preservation and public education efforts on the island and therefore felt it a worthy and necessary cause to the long term sustainability of the still aging island. Simultaneously Beinecke gained a deeper appreciation for the natural environment of the Island and began actively preserving the island's natural landscape on his own as well. Walter Beinecke Jr. started the Nantucket Conservation Foundation and the Nantucket Land Bank both of

which are dedicated to the preservation of the natural landscape and prevention of excess development. (Beinecke Jr., 1998)

Beinecke's efforts towards a holistic preservation of the island's sense of place has undoubtedly altered the course of Nantucket's history. During the tourism boom of the mid 1900s, if it had not been for Walter Beinecke's extensive preservation efforts from a business's stand point, commercial development might have overtaken the island. There were no zoning laws or building restrictions on the island at the time and the island was facing considerable development pressure. Walter Beinecke worked to preserve the unique national asset that is Nantucket's built environment and used tourism to fund his preservation agenda. Beinecke went so far as to ban national chains from the island in order to ensure Nantucket remained a one-of-a-kind destination.

While Nantucket already operated on a small scale as a tourism destination before Beinecke, he altered and matured the system through his redevelopment and preservation efforts alike. When considering Butler's Destination lifecycle model (1980) it could be argued that prior to Beinecke's involvement Nantucket existed within the Involvement stage of the lifecycle. However when examining the destination, by the 1970's Beinecke's efforts and actions to preserve the destination seem to have aided in the destinations progression to the Development stage of the model as the Island now actively supports and caters to tourists; a defining characteristic of this stage in the model.

One aspect of this model that Beinecke has always unknowingly been concerned with is carrying capacity. A destination is thought to have reached carrying capacity when the destination can no longer absorb any more tourists and it is an integral part of

the later stages of the model. Growth rates and visitor numbers are a constant consideration throughout the model and it progresses from few to too many from the early to the later stages. During the consolidation or fourth stage of the model destinations experience slowing growth rates as the destination reaches a carrying capacity. As the destination reaches its full capacity it moves into the next stage of the model, stagnation which is characterized by achieving a peak number of visitors. Finally a destination begins to enter a the final stage; decline. As tourism numbers continually exceed the destination's true carrying capacity the negative impacts of tourism have outweighed the positive for such a sustained period the destination falls from fashion.

Through the constant comparison method of this case study it is clear to see how these themes, while developed years later were a constant consideration for Beinecke's every action. He valued the island's unique character that created and defined the destination's sense of place and he felt that through preservation of the built environment he could showcase this uniqueness and character to the world in a way that financially supported and socially complimented the island's sense of place. Having been raised in an entrepreneurial family Beinecke realized the necessity of financial stability and sustainability in any endeavor. He invested his own money, time and expertise to 'fill in some of the gaps' in order to ensure that the destination became a competitive tourist attraction. Furthermore he ensured the island's sustainability by taking firm control of the numbers of visitors that came to the island. By doing so he ensured that the economic aspects became sustainable but more importantly that the unique and historic architecture and charm would not deteriorate due to overuse.

Today Nantucket is a premier island destination for America's elite, arguably because of Beinecke's vision. In effect, Beinecke created a 'Boutique Destination' and had a clearly defined vision for what he felt was appropriate for Nantucket. Through some re-envisioning and restoration, Beinecke, was successful in preserving the feel and charm of Nantucket's Whaling Era through restoring and rehabilitating much of the downtown area. While not popular at the time, Beinecke is now considered to be one of the islands saving graces as his efforts in preservation helped lead to the entire Island being placed on the National Register of Historic Places, one of the first of many in the country. His actions undoubtedly altered the course of Nantucket's history and in effect redefined the community as a tourist destination.

While it is clear through visitor numbers and land values, that Beinecke was extremely successful in designing a high-end tourist destination, this study aimed to more closely examine the actions and steps he took to achieve this. By conducting a close examination of his actions this study may be used to provide future destinations with an example of how preservation was used to create a successful boutique heritage tourism destination. As the edges of the map continue to be filled in and the world becomes more globalized, maintaining and honoring our past is becoming one of the few things that sets one destination apart from the next.



Figure 1. The African Meeting House and the Higginbotham House at 27 York Street, as seen from the Five Corners intersection. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.



Figure 2. A typical Nantucket house at 87 Main Street, with 4 bayed facade. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.



Figure 3. Snapshot of the White Elephant on Easton Street c. 1920. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.



Figure 4. The house known as The Breakers, which later became an annex of the White Elephant hotel. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.



Figure 5. The Ocean House Hotel at 29 Broad Street c. 1870, with a flag flying on the cupola, now the Jared Coffin House. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association



Figure 6. Views overlooking Nantucket town and waterfront construction 1968. Photo courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association.

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